

THE  
PLEASANT HISTORY  
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Thomas of Reading,

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The six worthy Y eomen of the VVest.

Corrected and inlarged by T. D.



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# The pleasant Historie of the six worthy Ycomen of the West.



In the daies of King Henry the fift, who was the first King that instituted the high Court of Parliament, there lained nine men, which had the trade of Clothinge, were famous throughout all England. Which Art in those daies was held in high reputation, both in respect of the great riches that thereby was gotten, as also of the benefit it brought to the whole Common wealth: the younger sons of Knights & Gentleman, to whom their fathers would leue no lands, were most commonly preferred to learne this trade, to the end that thereby they might live in god estate, and have sorte their daies in prosperity.

Among all Crafts this was the onely chiese, for that it was the greatest merchandize, by the which our Country became famous throughout all Nations: and it was verily thought, that the one halfe of the people in the land lained in those daies therby, and in such god sorte, that in the common wealth there were few or no beggers at all: poore people whom God lightly blessed with most chldren, did by meanes of this occupation so order them, that by the time that they were come to be six or seuen yeres of age, they were able to get their owne bread: Indenesse was banished our coast, so that it was a rare thing to heare of a chiese in those daies. Therefore it was not without cause that Clothiers were then both honoured and loued, among whom these nine persons in this Kings daies were of great credit, viz, Tho. Cole of Reading, Gray of Gloucester, Sutton of Walisburie, Fitzallen of Worcester, (commonly called William of Worcester) Tom Dour of Exeter, and Simon of South hampton, alias Superborth: who was by the King called, The six worthy Husbands of the West. Then were there three living in the North, that is to

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Gray, Cawood, Hodkinnes of Wallfayre, & Martin Bryan of Manchester. Every one of these kept a great number of servants at worke, spinners, carders, weavers, fullers, dyers, sharpeners, and other, to the great admiration of all those that came into their houses to behold them.

Now you shall understand, these gallant Clothiers, by reason of these dwelling places, separated themselves in these severall compaines: Gray of Gloucester, William of Worcester and Thomas of Reading, because their journey to London was all one way, they conuersed commonly together: And Duke of Exeter, Sutor of Salisburie, & Simon of Southhampton, they in like sorte kept company the one with the other, meeting ever altogether at Wasingstoke: and the three Northerne Clothiers did the like, whiche commonly did not meet till they came to Bosomes Gane in London.

Moreover, for the loun and delght that these Westerne men had each in others compaine, they did to yondise, that their waines and themselves woule ever mett upon a day in London at Iarrats Hall, surnamed the Cyant: soz that hee surpassed all other men of that age, both in stature & strengh: whose merriments and memorabile deedes, I will set downe vnto you in this following discourse.

How King Henry sought the fauour of all his subiects, especially of the Clothiers. Chap. 1.

**T**he same was called Baynclarke, beynge the thrid Son to the renowned Conquerour: after the death of his brother William Rufus, tooke vpon him the government of this Land in the absence of his elder broffer Robert Duke of Normandie, who at this time was at wars amongst the jnnclers, and was chosen King of Jerusalem, the whiche he for the loun he bare to his owne Countrey, refused, and with great honouer returned from the holy Land of whose comming when King Henry understood, knowing her woulde make claime to the Crowne, sought by all meane possible to intine the earl wyl of his probility, and to get the fauor of the Commons by counseil.

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telle : for the obtaining whereof he did them many faours, thereby the better to strengthen himself against his brother.

If chanced on a time , as he, with one of his sonnes, and officers of his nobilitie, rode from London towards Wales, to appease the fury of the Welshmen, which then began to raise themselves in arms against his authority , that he met with a great number of Waines loaden with cloth , coming to London , and setting them still dñe one after another so many together , demanded whose they were : the Maine men answered in this sort : Coles of Reading ( quoth they ) Then by and by the King asked another saying : whose cloth is all this ? Olde Coles, quoth he : and againe anon after he asked the same question of others , & still they answered, Olde Coles . And it is to be remembred , that the King met them in such a place so narrow and streight , that he with the rest of his traine , were faine to stand close to the hedge , whilst the carts passed by, the which at that time being in number aboue two hundred , was neare hand an houre ere the King could get thome to be gone : so that by this long stay , he began to be displeased , although the admiration of that sight did much please him ; but breaking out in discontent. by reason of his stay , he said , I thought Olde Cole had got a Commission for all y carts in the Country to cary his cloth . And how if he have ( quoth one of the Mainemen ) doth that g give you good Sir ? Yes , god Sir , said our King . What say you to that ? The fellowe king the King ( in asking that question ) to bend his browes , though he knew not what he was , yet being abashd , he answered thus : Whyp Sir if you be angry , no body can hinder you ; for possible Sir you haue anger at commandement . The King setting him in vittering of his iudgs to quafier and quake , laugh'd heartily at him , as wel in respect of his simple answer , as at his feare : and so soone after the last waine went by , which came ppresent passage unto him and his nobles and the earl entring into communication of the commoditye of clothing , the King gaue order at his home returne to haue old Cole brought before his Maitre , to the intent he might haue conference with him , noting him to be a subiect of great

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abilliter but by that time he came within a mile of Hanes he met another company of waines halke soyladen with cloth, whereby the King was driven into a further admiration: and demanding whose they were, answere was made in this sorte: They be god man Suttons of Halsbury, god sir: and by that time a score of them were past, he asked again, saying: whence are these; Suttons of Halsbury, quod they, and so will, as often as the King asked that question, they answered, Suttons of Halsburie. God send me many such Suttons, said the King. And thus the farther he travelled westward, more waines and more he met continually: upon which occasion he said to his Nobles, That it would never greate a King to die for the defence of a certeine Countrey and fathfull subiects. I alwayes thought ( quoth he ) that Englands valour was more then her wealth, yet now I see her wealth sufficient to maintaine her valour, which I will kepe to cherish in all I may, & with my sword kepe my selfe in possession of that I have. Kings and Lovers can braken no partners: and therefore let my Brother Robert thinke, that although he was Heire to England by birth, yet I am King by possesyon. All his fauourers I must account my foes, and will serue them as I did the ungratefull Earle of Shrewsbury, whose lands I have seizes, and banisht his body. But now we will leane the King to his tourney into Wales, and waiting his home returne, in the meane time tell you the meeting of these folly Clothiers at London.

How William of Worcester, Gray of Gloucester, and old Cole of Reading, met all together at Reading, & of their communication by the way as they rode to London. Chap. 2.

**V**V Hen Gray of Gloucester, and William of Worcester were come to Reading, according to their cus-  
tome, they alwayes called old Cole to haue his compaines to London, who also duely attended their comming, hauing prouided a god breakfast for them: and when they had well refreshed themselves, they take their horses and rode on to-  
wards the Cittie: and in their tourney William of Worcester  
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Sir asked them if they had not heard of the Earle of Moraigne his escape out of the Land. What is he fled, qd. Gray? I muse much at this matter, being in such great regard with the King as he was: but I pray you, doe you not know the cause of hts going, qd. Cole? The common report, quoth Gray, is this, that the constous Earle, who through a grēdy desire, never left beggynge of the King for one thing or other, and his request being now denied hym, of mēre obstinacy & willfull forwardnesse hath banished himselfe out of the Land, & quite so; taken the Country of Cornwall, having made a vow neuer to set fot within England againe, and as report goeth, he with the late banisht Earle of Shrewsbury, haue loyned themselves with Robert Duke of Normandy, against the King, the whiche action of theirs hath inflamed the Kings wāth, that their Lābles with their chldren are quite turned out of doyses succourlesse and friendlesse, so that it is told me, they wander vp and dwyne the Country like sorozne people, and although many doe pity them, yet se w̄ doe relēue them.

A lamentable hearing qd. William of Wōcester, and with that castynge their eyes aside, they espyed Tom Dove with the rest of his compānions some riding to mēte them, who as soone as they were come thither, fell into such pleasant discourses, as did shōten the long way they had to Colebroke; where alwayes at their comming towards London they dined: and being once entred into their Inne, according to old custome, god therē was prouided for them: soz these Clothiers were the cheapest guesst that trauellled along the way: and this was as sure as an act of Parliament, that Tom Dove could not digest his meat without mustache, nor drinke wine without women. So that his hostesse being a merry wench, would oftentimes call in two or thre of her neighbours w̄ives to kepe him company, when ere they parted they were made as pleasant as þes. And this being a continual custome amongst them when they came thither, at length the wōmens husbands beganne to take exceptions at their w̄ives going thither: whereupon great controuersie grew betwēen them, in such sort, that when they were most restrained

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restrained, then shc y had most desire to wokke their wifles : now gip quoth they, must we be so tyed to our taske, that we may not zinke with our friendes : he sa, vpon these yellow hose, will no other die serue your turne : haue we thus long bin your wifes, and doe you now mistrust vs : verily you eat too much salt, and that makes you grow cholerike, badde liuers fridg all others the like, but in fash you shall not bridle vs so like asses, but wee will goe to our friendes, when we are sent so ; and doe you what you can. Well, quoth their husbands, if you be so head strong, we will tame you: it is the duty of honest women to obey their husbands sayng. And of honest men (quoth they) to thinke well of their wifes; but who doe sworne impeach their credit, then their husbands, charging them, if they doe but smilie, that they are fubtil; and if they doe but winke, they account them wifly; if fair of countenance, then sullen: if they be stoward, then they are counted brawnes: and shewish if they be gentle: if a woman keape her house, then you will say she is melancholy, if she walke abzoad, then you call her a gauder; a wantane, if she be prettie; and a wanton, if she be pleasant: so there is no woman in the world that knoweth how to please you that we thinke our selues accurte to be married wifes, living with so many woes. These men, of whose company you so warne vs, are (so ought that ever we saw) both honest and courteous, and in wealth farre beyond our selves: then what reason is there, wh: we should restraine to visit them? to their godd will so much to be requited with scorne, that therell cost may not be counteraised with our company: if a woman be disposed to play light of loue, alas, alas, doe you thinke that you can preuen her? Nay we will abyde by it, that the restraint of liberty infiores women to beloue: for where a woman cannot be trusted, she cannot thinke her self beloved, and if not beloved, what cause hath she to care for such a one? therfore husbands reforme your opinions & doe not worke your owne wifes with our discredit. The Clothiers, we tell you, are foly fellowes, and but in respect of our courtesie, they would scorne our company.

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The men hearing their wifes so well to plead for themselves  
knew not how to answere, but said, they would put the bur-  
den on their consciences, if they dealt untruly with them, and  
so left them to their owne wills. The women having thus  
conquered their husbands concents, would not leane the fauour  
of their friends for crownes, and as abone the rest Tom Dove  
was the most pleasantest, so was he had in most reputation  
with the women, who for his sake made this song:

Welcome to towne, Tom Dove, Tom Dove,

The merriest man aliuie,

Thy company still we loue, we loue,

God grant thee well to thriue,

And never willdepart from thee,

For better or worse, my ioy,

For thou shalt still haue our good will,

Gods blessing on my sweet boy.

This song went vp and downe through the whole Country  
and at length became a dance among the common sort; so that  
Tom Dove, for his mirth and good fellowship, was famous  
in every place. Now when they came to London, they were  
welcome to the Dark larrat the Gyaunt, & as soone as they were  
alighted, they were saluted by the sperchants, who waited  
their coming thither, and alwayes prepared for them a cost-  
ly supper, where they commonly made their bargaine, and up-  
on every hargaine made, they all vsed to send some tokenes to  
the Clothiers wifes. The next morning they went to the hal,  
where they met the Northern Clothiers, who greeted one an  
other in this sorte. What, my masters of the West, well met:  
what thare? what thare? Euen the best thare our mer-  
chants could make vs, (quoth Gray.) Then you could not  
chuse but fare well, quoth Hodgekins: you be weiry of our  
company, adieu, quoth Surton: Not so, said Martin, but shall  
we not have a game ere we goe? Yes saith soz an hundred  
pounds. Well said, old Cole, said they: and with that Cole  
and Gray went to the Dice with Martin and Hodgekins; and  
the Dice running on Hodgekins side, Coles money began to  
waste. Now by the masse, quoth Cole, my mony shrinkes as

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bad as fortherne cloth. When they had played long, Gray kept to it, and recovered againe the money that Cole had lost. But while they were thus playng, the rest being delighed in contrary matters, every man satisfied his owne humour.

Tom Dowe called for musick, William of Worcester for wine, Sutton set his delight in hearing merry tales, Simon of Henthamton got him into the kitchin, and to the pottage pot he goes, for he esteemed more a messe of pottage, then of a venison pasty. Now sir, Cuthbert of Kendall was of another mind, for no meate pleased him so well as mutton, such as was laced in a red petticoat. And you shall understand, that alwaies when they went to dice, they got into Bosomes lane which was so called of his name that kept it, who being a soule sloven, went alwayes with his nose in his bosoms, and one hand in his pocket, the other on his stasse, figuryngh forth a description of cold enter, for he alwaies wore two coates two caps, two or thre paire of stockings, and a highe paire of shomes, ouer the whiche he drew on a great paire of lined slippers, and yet woul he oft complainche of cold: wherefore of all men generally he was called Old Bosome, and his house Bosomes lane.

This lamp of cold ice had lately married a young wife, who was as wilful as she was wanton, and in her company did Cuthbert onely delight, and the better to make passage to his loue, he would often thus commyne with her: I muse, god wife, quoth he. God wife, quoth she. Verly sir, in mine opinion there is none god but God, and therfore call me Mistresse. Then said Cuthbert, Faire mistris, I haue often mused, that you being a proper woman, could find in your heart so to match with such a greaze Carle as this, an euill mannered mate, a soule lumpe of kitchin-stuffe, and such an one as is indeued a scoorne of men; how can you like him that all women mislike: loue such a loathsome creature: me thinkes verly it shold gretue you to lend him a kiste, much more to lie with him. Indeed sir, quoth she, I had but hard fortune in this respect, but my friends would haue it so, & truly my liking and my loue toward him are like, he never had the one, nor neuer

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uer shall get his other: yet I may say to you, before I married him, there were diuers proper young men that were introynt unto me, whiche loued me as their liues, and glad was he that could get my company those were my golden daies, wherein my pleasure abounded, but these yeeres of care and griefe, wherin my sorrowes excede. Now no man regards me, no man cares for mee, and albesyt in secrete they might beare me god-will, yet who dares shew it? and this is a double griefe, he carrieth over me so fealous a minde, that I cannot looke at a man, but presently he accuseth me of inconstancy, although (I protest) without cause.

And in troth quod, Curbert he shoule haue cause to complaine for some what, were I as you. As sure as I live, and so he shall, quoth she, if he doe not change his byas. Curbert hearing her say so, began to grow further in requesting her fauour, wishing he might be her servant and secret friend, and the better to obtaine his desir, ha gracie her diuers gifts, insomuch that she began something to listyn unto him: and albesyt she liked well of his speches, yet woulde she blame him, and take hym vp very shroft sometimes for the same, till in the end, Curbert shewed himselfe to be desperate, saying he woulde vjowne himselfe rather than liue in her disfauour. O my swet heart not so, quoth she, God forbyd I shoulde be the death of any man: Comforst thy selfe, kind Curbert, and take this kille in token of further kindnesse, and if thou wolt haue my fauour, thou must bee wise and circumspect, and in my husbands sight I woulde alwaies haue thee to find fault with my doings, blame my bad busynesse, dispraise my person, and take exceptions at euery thing; whereby he woulde be as well pleased, as Simon of Southhampton with a messe of pottage.

Deare mistresse, quoth he, I will fullfill your charge to the bittermest, so that you wouldest take my test in earnest. She answered, Byt soulest speches I will esteeme the fairest, and take every dispraise to be a praise to thee, turning each word to the contrary: and so for this time adieu, good Curb. so for supper time drawes neare, & it is met for me to take to my meat. Wylsh that down comes old Bosome, calling his wiffe, saying,

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Ho Winifred, is supper ready; they haue done playng abothe: therfore let the Chamberlaine couer the Table. By & by husband, qd. She, it shall be done straight way. Holow now my Masters, who wins, qd. Cutberet Our mony walthes to the West, qd. Martin: Cole hath won 40. pounds of me, and Gray hath gosen well: the best is qd. Hodgekins, they will pay for our supper. Then let vs haue god stroke of Jack, qd. Sutton. Content sayd Cole, so I promise you, I flture not to growe rich by Dice playng, therfore call for what you will, I will pay for all. I haue said Simon Chamberlain, I pray thes bring a whole pottle of portage for me. Now Tom Dove had all the folkers at a becke of his finger, which follow him vp & downe the City, as diligent as little Chickens after hen, and made a booke, that there shold want no mancke. And at that time there lied in London a musician of great reputation, named Rejor, who kept his seruants in such costly garments, that they might seeme to come before any prince. Whiche coates were all of one colour; and it is sayd, that afterward the nobilitie of this Land, noting it for a sumely sight, bese in like manner to haue their men all in one livery. This Rejor was the most skilfulliest musician that lied at that time, whose wealth was very great, so that all the instruments wherpon his seruants playd, were richly garnished with vndres of siluer, and some gold: the bowens belonging to their Cloathes were all likewise of pure siluer. He was also for his wiffe come called to great office in the City, who alwaies bised (at his alone cost) the Pistorp & Hospital of St. Bartholome in Smithfield. His seruants being the best comydys in the City, were by Tom Dove appointed to play besy the young P;nes. Then supper being brought to the bord, they all sat downe and by and by after comes vp their Dame, who tolke his place among them: and anon after, the godly wiffe in a red petticoate & a washcoate, comes among them as white as a Lilly, saying My Masters, you are welcome, I pray you be merry. Thus falling close to their meate, when they had well bee, they found leasure to talke one with another: at what time Cob. begans thus to find fault, y wts, my Dame, quoth he, you haue a wife huswif

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huswif to your wife, here is meat made of a new fashion  
God sends meat, and she diuell sends drinke. Why what ales  
the meat, quoth she, servis it not your fernes, better men  
than your selfe are contente withhold, but a poutry companion  
fauer wort to please. Alway, you knyghtish thing, qu. Cutbert  
your husband hath a sturt I wwell of you : I amuell such a  
graue ancient man would match himselfe with such a young  
giglot that hath as much handomesse in her, as god has wif-  
ry, whichis full nothing at all. Well sir, sayd she, in regard  
of my husbands presence I am loth to agrauate anger, other-  
wise I would tell thee thy owne. O solo, what needs all this,  
quoth she company : in god faith, Cutbert, you are to blame,  
you knyght wchere none is. Wchere must speake my nyn,   
quoth Cutbert, I cannot dissemble, I trust the god man  
thinkes anver the wcole of me, so I have his god will, what  
the soule encl care I for his wifey. Enoughe, quod Tom  
Doy, but we with godlike remoue these drabbles, we meane  
to be merry, and not melancholy. Then said old Cole, Now  
trust me, Cutbert, we wil have you Dasselle and your friends  
era we part : here woman I dwylke to you, and regard not  
his hounds, for he is babbling wheresoever he comes. Quoth  
she woman, Nothing grettes me so much, as that he shold  
thus openly cheche me: if he had sondy any thing amisse, he  
migt haue spied a better time to tell me of it than now,  
þ wil he ned not thurst my bad busisstry into my husbands  
beam, I dwylke not so quietly with him, God wot : and with  
that sayd he. Come Cutbert, quoth they dylke to her, and  
shake hands and be friends. Come on, you puling baggage,  
quoth he, I dwylke to you, here will you pledge me and shake  
hands. So, (quoth she) I will se thee chalkefirst, shake  
hands with thee : I will shake hands with thee well as none.  
Therefor her husband, you shall shak hands with him  
then : If you will not shake hands, gie shake you what, þ ou  
young buswif : Will ell husband, say the; he becomes a woman  
to obey her husband, in regard wherof, I dwylke to him. Thats  
well sayd, quoth the company : So she take her leane & went  
downe, And within a hyshe after they paid the shot, and be par-

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red thence to Jarretts Hall, where they went to their lodging; and the next day they took their way homeward all together: and comming to C. celebre, they tooke vp their tongring: and it was Coles custome to deluer his money to the good wife of the house to keape it till morning, whiche in the end turned to his vitter destruction, as her easter shal be shewed.

How Grayes wife of Gloucester, with one or two more of her neighbours went to the Faire, where servants came to be hired, & how she tooke the Earle of Shrewesburies Daugter into her service, Chap. 3.

**I**t was wont to be an old custome in Gloucestershire, that at a certaine tyme in the yere, all such young men and spaldens as were out of seruice, reforted to a Faire that was kept neare Gloucester, there to be ready for any that wold come to hire them, the young men stod all on a roow in the one side, and the maidens on the other. It came to passe, that the Earle of Shrewesburies daughter, whose father was lately banished, being driven into great distresse, and weary with travell, as one whose delicate life was never used to such toyle, sat her downe vpon the high-way side, making this lamentation:

¶ false and deceitfull world, quoth she! who is in thee that wishes not to bee rid of thee, for thy extremities are great? Thou art deceitfull to all, and trusty to none. Fortune is thy treasurer, who is like thy selfe, wavering and unconstant, she setteth vp tyraunts, beateth downe kyngs: placeth thame to some, and renswone to others: Fortune giveth these evills and we see it not: with her hands she toucheth vs, & we sa le it not: she treades vs under foot, and we know it not: she speakes in our ears, and we heare her not: she cries aloud, and we understand not her not: And why? because we know her not, vntill misery vouch make her manifest.

Ah my deare fader, well meist thou doe. Of all misfortunes it is most unhappy to be foroynt: and by this misfortune came my fall. Was ever god a ldy brought to this extremity? What is become of my rare Jewels, my richaray, my sumptu,

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sumptuous fare, my waiting servants, my many friends, and  
all my vaine pleasures; my pleasure is banisht by displeasure,  
my friends fled like faires, my servants gone, my feasting tur-  
ned to fasting; my rich array consumed to ragges, and my  
jewels decke out my chieffest enemies: theresoze of all things  
the meane st State is best, pouerty with surety, is better then  
honour mixed with feare: seeing God hath allotted me to this  
millery of life, I will frame my heart to embraze humility, and  
carry a mind answerable to my misfortunes, lie on this vaine  
title of Ladiship, how little doth it availe the distressed: No,  
no, I must theresoze forget my birth and parentage, and think  
no more on fathers house, where I was wont to bee ser-  
ued, now will I learne to serue, and plaine Meg shall be my  
name, god Lord grant I may get a god seruice, nay any ser-  
vice shall serue, where I may haue meat, drinke, and apparell.  
She had no soone spoken these wozds, but she spide a couple  
of maidens moze comming towaras her; who were going to  
the faire: and bidding her god morrow, asked her if she went  
to the faire. Ver mary quod she, I am a pore mans child that is  
out of service, and I heare that at the Statute folkes doe come  
of purpose to hire servants. True it is, said the Maidens and  
thither goe we for the same purpose, and would be glad of your  
company. With a god Will, and I am right glad of yours,  
said she, beseeching you god Maidens, you will doe me the fa-  
vour, to tell me what seruice were best for me: for the more  
to blame my parents they would never put me forth to know  
any thing. Why what can you doe (quoth the Maidens) can  
you bzew and bake, make butter and chevre, and reape corne  
well: No verily, said Margaret, but I would be right glad to  
learne to doe any thing whatsoever it be. If you could spin or  
card, said another, you might doe excellent well with a Clo-  
thier, for they are the best seruices that I know there you shall  
be sure to fare well and so liue merrily.

Then Margaret wept, saying, alas, what shall I doe? I was  
never brought vp to these things. What can you doe nothing,  
quoth they? No truely (quoth she) that is god for any thing,  
but I can read and write, and solve some skill I haue in my  
needle,

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needle, and a little at my Lufe þat this, I ſe will profit me nothing. Good Lord, quoth they, alle you boþkith, we diþ neuer heare of a man before that could read and write. And alſo though you can bee no other thing, yet poſſibly you may get a ſervite, if you can behane your ſelfe manerly. I pray you ge another, ſaying you are boþkith, will you doe ſomuch as to reade a long letter that is ſent me? for I was at a friends of mine with it, and he was not at home, and ſo I know not what to do. I pray you let me ſee it, quoth Margaret, and I will shew you. Whereupon he reade as followeth.

O Jenny my joy, I die for thy loue,  
And now I heare say that thou doſt remoue,  
And therefore, Jenny, I pray thee recite,  
Where shall I meeete thee ſoone at night,

For why, with my Maſter no more will I stay,  
But for thy loue I will remoue away.  
O Jenny, Jenny, thou puttest me to paines  
That thou no longer wilt here remaine.

I will weare out my ſhoes of Neats-leather,  
But thou and I will meeete together;  
And in ſpite of Fortune, Rat, or Moule,  
We will dwell together in one house.

For who doth not eſteeme of thee,  
Shall haue no ſeruice done of me;  
Therefore good Jenny haue a care,  
To meet poore Fragmen at the faire.

Now alagood ſoule (quoth Jenny) I thinke he be the kindest yongman in the world. The reſt anſwered, that he ſe med no leſſe, and surely it appearith that he is a pretty witty fellow, quoth one of them, how finely he hath written his letter in thine, truſt me, I will giue you a god thing, and let me haue a copy of it to ſend to my sweet heart: that you ſhall with all my heart; & ſo comming to the faire, they tooke vp their ſtanding

waſhing.

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Within a while after, godlyse Gray of Gloucester came thither to store herselfe of diners commodities: and when she had bought what she would, she tolde her neigheur: he had great need of a male-servant or twaine: therfore quod she, god neighbour goe with me, and let me haue your opinion. With a god will, said her neighbour, and together they went, and looking and viewing the maidens over, therre tolke speciall notice of Margaret. Valene me, quoth she, therre stands a very proper maiden, and one of a modest and comely countenance. Merily, said her neighbour, so she is, as ouer I look'd upon.

The godlyne seeing them to view her so well, was so abashed, that a scarlet colour overspyed her lilly cheeks, which the woman perceiving, came unto her, and asked if she were willing to serue. The maid with a low curtie, and a most gentle speach, answered, it was the onely cause of her coming, Can you spynne or card, said godlyse Gray? Truly Dame, said she, though my cunning therin be but small, my god will to leame is great: and I trust, my diligence shall content you. What wages will you take, quoth godlyse Gray? I will reserre that, said Margaret, to your conscience and curtesie, desiring no more than what I shall deserve. Then asking what Country-woman she was, the maiden wept saying: Oh god dame, I was bifornly boorne at Shropshire, of poore parents, and yet not so nedye as unforntunate, but death hauing ended their sorowes, hath left me to the cruelty of these envious times, to finishe my parents Tragedy with my troubles. What maiden quod her dame, haue you a care to doe your busines, and to liue in Gods feare, and you shall haue no care to regard fortunes strookes, and so they went home together.

Now, so soone as the good man saw her, hee asked his wife wherre she had that maiden: She saide at the Faire. Whyn then quoth he, thou hast brought all the faire away, and I doubt it wers better for vs, to send the faire to another Towne, then to keepe the faire here. Whyn man, quoth she, what meane you by that? Woman, I meane this, that she will proue a Load, long to dwelle in the hearts of all my men after her, & so we shall haue wife scoule done of all woes. Then said his wife, I hope

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husband, Margaret will have a better care both to her owne credit, and our commodity then so, and so let her alone to luke to such matters. Is thy name Margaret quoth her master? proper is thy name to the person, for thou art a pearele flower, absent, and rich in beauty.

His wife hearing him say so, began to change her opinion: Tell her husband ( quoth she ) to the mindest that daye. Begyn you to like your maid so well I thought I had moost need to luke to your selfe before God. I had rather then an angel I had chosen some other but here you maist you shall packe hence, I will not no wch a fonske in my bosome, and therefore get you gone, I will none of you, mynches a fonske wher you may.

The maiden hearing her say so, fell downe on her knes, and besought her, saying, O sweete name, be not so crasht to me to turne me out of amses, now wch isles, I know not where to goe, or what to doe, if you seafake me. O let not the loving beauty of my face disapple me of your fauour: So, rather then that shall bindre my seruice, thynkyng hym shal lene vngure in face, and I will burnish beautys my greate stonemp. And with that, her abounding fernes stopped her spech, that thise could not utter one word more.

The woman seeing this, could not for shame any longer, nor could her master stay in the roome for laughing. Well Margaret, said her dame / little knowing that a lady knelled before her, Vsing thy selfe well, I will kepe thee and then shalt have my god-will if thou governe thy selfe with wisdome, & so he sent her about her busynesse. Her husband comming to supper sayd, How now wife art thou so doubtfull of me, that thou hast put away thy maiden? I wts(qd,she)you are a wise man, to stand prasing of a maidens beauty before her face; & you a wisse woman qd, he, to grow fealors without a cause. So to supper they went, and because Margaret the last her selfe of kindest behaviour among the rest, she was appointed to walte on the table. And it is to be understand, that Gray did never eate his meat alone, but syl had somes of his neighbours with him before whom he called his maid, saying, Margaret, come hither, Now because there was another of the same name

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name in the house, & he made answer, I call not you warden,  
quoth he, but Margaret with the lilly-white hand. After which  
time she was ever called Margaret the Warden.

How the Kinges Maisticie sent for the Clothiers, and of the  
sundry fauours which he did them. Chap. 4.

King Henry providing for his voyage into France, against  
King Lewis and Robert Duke of Normandie his owne  
brother, committed the Government of the Realme in his  
absence, to the Bishop of Salisbury, a man of great wise-  
dom and learning, whom the King esteemed highly, and af-  
terward he thought god to send for the cheste Clothiers of  
England, who according to the Kings appointment came to  
the Court, and having licence to come before his Maisticie, he  
spake to this effect.

The Strength of a King is the loue and friendship of his  
people, and he governes over his Realme most surely, that  
ruleth justice with mercy, for he ought to feare many whom  
many doe scorne: therefore the Councillours of the Common-  
wealth ought to obserue two especiall precepta: the one is that  
they do maintain the profit of the Commons, that whatsoever  
in their calling they doe, they reserveth thereunto: the other,  
that they be alwaies as well-carefull over the whole Com-  
mons wealth, as over any part thereof left, while they uphold  
the one, the other be brought to bitter decay.

And so almuch as I doe understand, and have partly seene,  
that you the Clothiers of England are no small benefit to the  
metale publishe, I thought it god to know from your owne  
monthes, if there be any thing not yet granted that may bene-  
fit you or any other thing to be remoued that doth hurt you.

At the grete desyre I haue to maintaine you in your trades,  
will cause me heresunto. Therefore boldly say what you  
would haue in the one thing or the other, I will grant it you.

With that, they all fell downe upon their knees, and de-  
clared God to haue his Maisticie, and Willmell, requested thise  
ayres to put in their answere: which was graunted.  
And thereupon they departed.

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When the Clothiers had well considered of these matters, at length they thought meet to request of his Majestie for their first benefit, that all the Cloth measures through the Land might be of one length, whereas to their great disadvantage before, every good town had a several measure the difficulty thereof was such, that they could not keepe them in memory, nor know how to keepe their reckonings. A he second thing whereof they found themselves grieved, was this, that the people would not take credit money, though it were never so god dower: whereupon it came to passe, That the Clothiers and others others, receyting great summes of money doe take amongst them much credit money, it served them to no use, because it would not goe current, but lay upon their hands without profit or benefit: whereof they prayed reso-  
lution. The third was a grieve, whereof Hodgekins of Ha-  
mbergh complained, and that was, That whereas the Towne of  
Halifax hused altogether upon Cloth ing, and by the reason  
of false boughers, and other evill shadues pernicious, they were  
all robb'd, and that their Clothies carried out of their fields,  
where they were dyng: What it would please his Majestie to  
grant the Colone this p[ro]misse. But whosoever he was  
that was taken holding their Cloth, might presently without  
any further triall be hanged up. When the day of their ap-  
pearance approached, the Clothiers came before the King, and deliuereyn  
by their petition in writing, Wherein his Majes-  
tie most graciously perusing, said, We are ready to fulli-  
fill their request: And therefore for the first point of their Peti-  
tion, he caused for a stalle to be brought him, and measuring  
thereupon the just length of his owne armes, delivered it to the  
Clothiers, saying, This measure shall be called a yard, and  
no other measure thereto wout all the Realme of England, shall  
he used for the same, and by this shall all men buy and sell, and  
we will so provide, that who so ever be he that abuse of our sub-  
iects by any false measure, that he shall not onely pay a fine  
for the same to the King, but also have his booy punished by  
imprisonment. And as concerning the second point of your  
Petition, because of my sudden departing out of the Land, I  
know

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know not better how to ease you of your griesse of crackt money this Decris I make because they account crackt money not currant, I say, none shall be currant but crackt money. And therfore, I will geue present charge, that all the money thoro w<sup>t</sup> the L<sup>t</sup> and sh<sup>t</sup> ill be fit, and so you shall suffer no losse.

But now for your last request for the Towne of Halifay; where by thentes your Clothies are so often stolne from you, seeing the Lawes already mounted in that case, are not sufficient to kepe men in awe, it is indeed high time to haue sharper punishment for them.

With that Hodgekins unmannly interrupted the King, saying in broad Northern spech, Ye gode faith, me Lieg, the saule eule of matsonis, gif any thing will kepe them whilat, till the barles be hanged by the cragge. What the dule cars they for bozing their eyne, sea long as they may goe groping by any doone the Country like fause liars louines, beggling and crackting.

The King smilng to haire this rough heitensellie make this reply: Content thes Hodgekins, for we will haue redresse for all: and albeit that hanging of men was never seene in England, yet seeing the corrupt wozis is grown moe bold in all wickednesse, I thinke not amisse to ordaine this death for such malefactors: and peculiarly to the Towne of Halifar I give this priuilege, That who soever they finde stealing their Clothie, be he taken with the gods, that without further iudgement they shal be hanged vp.

Thus (said our King) I haue granted what you request, and if hereafter, you find any other thing that may be god for you, it shall be granted, for no longer would I desire to liue among you, than I haue care for the gods of the Commonwealth: at which words ended the King rose from his roiall Throne, wher he clothed on their knies, prayed for; bath his health, and happy success, and he wod themselves most thankfull for his Majesties fauour. His Majestie bending his body towards them said that at his home return, he would by the grace of God visit them.

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How the Clothiers had provided a sumptuous feast for the  
King's sonnes, prince *William* and Prince *Roberts*, at Ger-  
rard's Hall : shewing also what chance befell *Cuthbert* of  
Kendall at that same instant. Cha. 5.

**T**he Clothiers departing from the Court in a merry mod-  
el to full of their god successe, each one to other praised and  
magnified the Kings great wisedome and vertue, commen-  
ding also his affabilitie and gentle disposition, so that Hodge-  
kins affirmed on his faith, that hee had rather speake to the  
Kings maestrie, then to many Justices of peace. Indeed (said  
Cole) he is a most wiſe and mercifull Prince, and I pray  
God he may long reigne ouer us. Amen said the rest.

Then said Cole, My spawlers, shall we forget the great con-  
fesse of the Kings sonnes, those swet and gentle Princes that  
it will shew us favour in our suite; in my opinion, it were rea-  
son to gratifie them in some sorte, that we may not bitterly be  
concerned of ingratitude: wherefore (if you thinke god) we  
will prepare a banquet for them at our Darke Garrets, who as  
you know, hath a faire house, and godly rooms. Besides, the  
man himſelfe is of a most courteous minde & good behavior,  
ſufficient to entertaine a Prince; his wife alio is a worthy ſine  
Cooke: all which conſidered, I knowe not a fitter place in  
London. Tis true, quoth Sutton, and if the rest be content, I  
am pleased it shall be ſo. At this they all anſwered, Aye, ſo  
quoth they, it will not be paffing ſo ſhyll bags a peice, and  
that we ſhall recover in our crackt money.

Being thus agrēd, the feaſt was prepared. Tom Dout, quoth they, we will commit the providing of muſick to thee: and I, ſaid Cole, will invite diners of our ſpechants and their  
wives to the ſame. That is well remembred, ſaid Gray. Upon this they caled to their Dark and Garretts, ſeuring their determination, who moſt willingly ſaid, all thing ſhould be  
made ready, but I would haue two daies liberty, ſaid the god-  
wife, to prepare my houſe and other things. Content ſaid the  
Clothiers, in the meane ſpace we will bid our queſts, and diſ-  
patch

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patch our other affaires. But Simon of Southampton charged his hostesse, that in any case she should not forget to make good scope of pottage. It shall be done quoth she.

It is to be remembered, that while this preparation was in hand, that Cuth. of Kendal had not forgot his kindness to his Daſtelle of Fosomes Inne. Wherefore finding time convenient when her husband was oversiting his bay-makers, hee graced her in this sorte, his wifer hostesse, though I were the last time I was in towne, ouer bold with you, yet I hope it was not so offendire to you as you made shee to me. Bold, my Cuthbert, quoth she, thou hast volden thy ſelfe my ſervant: and ſo being, you are not to be blamed for doing what I wold you. By my honeſty, I could not chuse but ſmile to my ſefe, ſo ion as I was out of their ſight, to thinke how prettily you began to brabble. But now, quoth he, we will change our chidings to kiffings, and it vexeth me that these cherry lipps ſhould be ſubiect to ſuch a Lobrede as thy husband.

Subiect to him, quoth ſhe: In faith Sir no, I will haue my lipps at as much liberty as my tongue, the one to ſay what I like, & the other to touch whom I like: In troth, ſhall I tel thee, Cuthbert, the churle's breath ſmels ſo ſtrong, that I care as much for killing of him, as for looking on him: it is ſuch a miſhapen milier, and ſuch a bundle of beaſtlierne, that I can never thinke on him without ſplitting. Ife upon him, would my friends haue carried me to my graue, when they went with me to the Churche, to make him my husband. And ſo ſhedding a few diſembling teares, ſhe ſtopt. "hat, my swet miftreſſe (quoth he) waſe you: Pay ſit voldone by my ſide, and I wil ſing the one of my Country Jigges to make thee merry. Wil ſit thou in faith (quoth ſhe) ver�ly, ſaid Cuthbert: and in troth, quoth ſhe, if you ſing a ſong, I will ſing with you. "hat is well, you can ſo ſuddenely change your note, quoth Cuthbert, then hanc at it.

Man. Ong haue I lou'd this bonny Lassie,  
Yet durſt not ſhew the ſame.

Wom. Therein you p̄ one your ſelfe an Aſſe,

Man. I was the more to blame.

Yet.

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Yet still will I remaine to thine,  
Trang dilly do , trang dilly:  
Thy frind and louer secretly  
Wom. Thou art my owne sweet billy.

Man. But when shall I enjoy the  
delight of thy faire loue ?  
Wom. Euen when thou seest that fortune doth,  
all maner lets remoue.  
Man. O, I will fold thee in my armes ,  
Trang dilly do , trang dilly,  
And keep thee so from sudden harmes ,  
Wom. Thou art my owne sweet billy.

Wom. My husband he is gone from home ,  
you know it very well.  
Man. But when will he retурне againe ?  
Wom. In truth I cannot tell.  
If long he keepe him out of sight ,  
Trang dilly do , trang dilly.  
Be sure thou shalt haue thy delight .  
Man. Thou thou art bonny lassie .

While they were singing this song , her husband being on  
a sudden come home , stod secretly in a corner and heard all ,  
and blesting himselfe with both his hands , said O abominable  
distillation , monstrous hyprocrite , and are you in this hu-  
mour : can you brable together and sing together : well qd.  
hee , I wll let them alone , to see a little moze of their knan-  
ry . Neuer did Cat watch mouse so narrowly , as I will  
watch them : And so going into the kitchin , he asked his wife  
if it were not dinner time . Euen by and by , husband ( quoth  
she ) the meat will be ready . Presently after comes in Hodge-  
kins and Martin , who straight asked for Cuthbert of Kentall .  
Answor was made , that he was in his chamber . So when  
they had called him , they went to dinner : then they requested  
that their Dast and Dallest would sit with them .

Husband , said she , you may goe if you please : but as soz me , I  
will

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will vesse pardon. Nay, god-wifē, goe vp said her husband,  
ye hat woman, you must bearre with your guestes. Whyn husband,  
quod she, doſt thou thinke that any can bearre the ſtrites and  
ſtrompes, whiche that godtherne like gaue me the laſt time he  
was in towne? now God forgiue me, I had as liefe ſee the di-  
uell as to ſee him: therefore god husband goe up your ſelfe, &  
let me alone, for in faith, I ſhall neuer abyde that Jacke while  
I liue. Upon theſe wordes away went her husband, & though  
he ſaid little, he thought the moſe. Now when he came vp, his  
guestes bad him welcome. I pray you ſit downe, god mine  
Dame, quoth they, where is your wife? what, will ſhe ſit  
with vs? no verily ſaid he, the ſwifh woman hath taken ſure  
a diſpleaſure againſt Cutbert, that the ſweares ſhe will neuer  
come in his company. Is it ſo, ſaid the other? then truſt me  
we are all well agreed: and I ſwear by my fathers ſale quod he  
that were it not miſtre god will to you, then loue to her, I  
would neuer come to your house miſtre. I belene it well ſaid  
old Bolome. And ſo with other communication they droue out  
the time, till dinner was ended.

After they were riſen, Martin & Hodgekins got them forth  
about their affaires, but Cuth, tolke his Dame by the hand, ſay-  
ing, My Dame, I le nor falke with your wife; for my part I  
thought we had þir friends: but ſcaring her ſtomacke is ſo big, &  
her heat ſo great, I will ſee what ſhe will ſay to me; and with  
that he went into the kitchin, ſaying, God ſpeed you Dame. It  
muſt be when you are away then, ſaid ſhe. What is your rea-  
ſon, ſaid the other? Because God never comes where knaues  
are preſent. By godly draggel taſle, quod he, had I ſucha wife,  
I would preſent her fallow-face to the diuell for a candle.  
With that ſhe bent her brows, & like a Fury of hell began to  
ſte at him, ſaying, Whyn you gag-both Jacke, you blinking  
conuencion, get thee out of my kitchin quickly, or with my paw-  
dred base-broth, I will make your pate as bald as a Fryers.

Get me gone, quoth he: thou haſt not bid me twice: out  
you darby haſles, you will make your husbands haſte growe  
thorow his head I doubt: and with that he got him into the  
Hall, and ſat him downe on the bench by his Dame, to whom

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he: 'Tis pittle, my Dast', that your aged yeres that loues  
quietnesse, shold be troubled with such a scolding queane. I,  
God helpe me, Goo helpe, quoth the old man, and so went  
towards the stable; whiche his wife watching, suddenly kept  
out and gaue Cuthbert a kisse.

Within an houre after, the old man craftily called for his  
dag to rse to field: but as lone as he was gone, Cuthbert and  
his Dasselle were such god friends, that they got into one of  
the Ware-houses, and lockt the doore to them: but her hus-  
band having set a spie for the purpose, suddenly turned backe,  
& called for a capcase which lay in the Ware-house. The ser-  
vant could not finde the key by any meanes. Whereupon he  
called to haue the locke broke open. Whiche they within hear-  
ing, opened the doore of their owne accord. So lone as her hus-  
band espide her in that place, with admiration he said: O pas-  
sion of my heart, what doe you here? what you two that can-  
not abide one an other? what make you so close togesher? is  
your chiding and rayling, brabbling, and bauling, come to this?  
O what dissemlers are these! & by my Dass. qd. Cuthbert,  
what need you take the master so hot? I gave a Cheeze to my  
Country-man Hodgekins, to lay vp, and deliuer it to your  
wife to be kept; and then is it not reason, that she should come  
& secke me my Cheeze? O quoth the old man, belike the doore  
was lockt, because sh. Cheeze shold not run away. The doore  
said his wife unknowen to us clapt to it selfe, and hauing a  
spring locke, was presently fast. Well, hyswise, qd. he, I will  
glue you as much credit as a Crocodile, but as for your com-  
panyon, & will teach him to come hither to looke Cheeses.  
And with that he caused his men to take him presently, and  
to bind hym hand and foot. Whiche being done they drew hym  
up in a basket into the smoky loun of the hall, and there they  
did let hym hang all that night, even till the next day dinner  
time, when he shold haue bene at the banquet with the Prin-  
ces: for neither Hodgekins nor Martin could intreate their  
gemes & all so let hym downe.

And in such a heate was hee driven with drawing hym vp,  
that he was faine to cast off his golwes, his coates, and two  
paire

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palce of his stockings, to coule himselfe, making a bole he shoulde hang there seuen yeres, except the Kings sonis came in person to beg his pardon, which most of all gifered Cut. Whē Ecclē and the rest of the westernne Peoumen heard herosf, they could not chuse but laugh, to thinke that he was taken tardy.

The yong Princes having giuen promise to be with the clothiers, kept their houre but when all the rest went to give them entertainment, Simon was so busse at lapping his pottage, that he could not spare so much tyme. Whiche when the Princes saw, with a smilng countenance they said, Hup Simon ther's god broth: or else beshew our Dastesse, quoth he, neuer looking behind him to see who spake, till the Prince clapt him on the shoulder. But god Lord, how blanke he was when he spied them, knowing not how to excuse the matter.

Well, the Princes hauing ended their banquet, Jarrah comes and with one of his hands stoke the table of sixene fote long quicke from the ground ouer their heads from before the Princes, and set it on the other side of the hall, to the great aduantage of all them that beheld it.

The Princes being then ready to depart, the Clothiers moued them in pleasant manner, to be god to one of their company, that did neither sit, lye, nor stand. Then he must needs hang god the Prince. And so he doth, most excellent Prince quoth they; and therewhile tolde them the whelle matter. When they heard the story down to Bosomes Inne they goe, where looking vp in the rofe, spide yore Cutbert pinned vp in a basket, and almost smoaked to death, who altho gh he were greatly ashamed, yet most pitifullly desired that they would get him release.

What is his trespass said the Prince: Nothing ift shall like your Grace, qd. he, but for looking for a cheſe: But he could not finde it wi. hout my wiffe, said the god man: the viliaine had late y disterd wiſh muffon, and could not diſter his meate without cheſe, for whiche cause I haue made him fast these twentynge houres, to the end he may haue a better stomack to eate his dinner, then to vſe dalliance.

Let me entreat you quoth the Prince, to releaſe him: and ic

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ever hereafter you catch him in the corne, clappe him in the  
pound. Your Grace shall request or command any thing at  
my hand, safo the old man: and so Cutbert was let downe un-  
bound, but when he was loose, he vowed never to come with-  
in that house moze. And it is said, the old man Bosome ordain-  
ed, that in remembrance of this deed, every yere once, all  
such as came thither to aske for chases, should be so serued:  
which thing is to this day kept.

How *Simons* wife of Southampton, being wholly bent to  
pride and pleasure, requested her Husband to see London,  
which being granted, how she got good wife *Sutton* of Sa-  
lisbury to goe with her, who tooke *Crab* to goe along with  
them, and how he prophecied of many things. Chap. 6.

**T**he clothiers being all come from London, Suttons wife  
of South-hampton, who was with her husband very mer-  
ry and pleasant, brake her mind vnto him in this sort:

God Lord, husband, will you never be so kind as let me goe  
to London with you? shall I be pent vp in South-hampton,  
like a parrot in a cage, or a Capon in a cope? I would request  
no moze of you in item of my paines, carke and care, but to  
haue one weekes time to see that faire City: what is this life,  
if it be not mirt with some delight? and what delight is more  
pleasing than to see the fashions and maners of unknowne pla-  
ces? Therfore god husband, if thou louest me, deny not this  
simple request. you know I am no common gadder, nor haue  
ost troubled you with travell. God knowes, this may be the  
last thing that euer I shall request at your hands.

Woman, quoth he, I would willingly satisfie your desire,  
but you know it is not convenient for both of vs to be abroad,  
our charge is so great, and therfore our care ought not to be  
small. If you will goe your selfe, one of my men shall goe  
with you, and money enough you shall haue in your purse:  
but to goe with you my selfe, you se my busynesse will not  
permit me.

Husband, said shee, I accept your gentle offer, and it may

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be I shall infreat my godly Sutton to go along with me. I shall be glad qd. her husband, prepare your selfe when you will.

When she had obtained this licence, she sent her man Wescell to Halsbury, to know of godly wife Sutton if she would kepe her company to London. Suttons wife being as willing to goe, as she was to request, never rested till she had gotten leue of her husband; the which when she had obtained, casting in her mind their pleasure would be small, being but they twaine: whereupon the wolly woman sent letters by collericke Cracke her man, both to Grayes wife, and Fitzallens wife, that they would meet them at Reading, who liking well of the match, consented, and did so prounde, that they met according to promise at Reading, and from thence with Coles wife they went altogether, with each of them a man to London, each one taking vp their lodging with a severall friend.

When the Merchants of London understood they were in towne, they invited them every day home to their owne houses, where they had delicate god cheare: and when they went abroad to see the commodities of the City, the Merchants wives ever bore them company, being attred most daintie and fine: which when the Clothiers wives did see, it grieved their hearts they had not the like.

Now, when they were brought into Cheap-side, there with great wonder they beheld the shoppes of the Goldsmiths, and on the other side, the wealthy Mercers, whose shoppes shined with all sorts of coloured stilles: in Watling-street they vies wed the great number of Drapers: in Saint Martins, Sharmakers: at Saint Nicholas Church, the flesh-shambles: at the end of the old Change, the Fish-mongers: in Candlewiche-street, the Weavers: then came into the Jewes street, where all the Jewes did inhabite: then came they to Blackewell-hall, where the Country Clothiers did vise to met.

Afterwards they proceeded, and came to S. Pauls Church, whose steeple was so high, that it seemed to pierce the clouds, on the top whereof, was a great and mighty weather-cocke, of cleane staine, the which notwithstanding seemed as small as a sparrow to mens eyes, it stood so exceeding high, the whiche

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godly weather-cock afterwards was stolne away, by a cunning Cripple, who found meanes one night to climb vp to the top of the steeple, and take it downe : with the which, and a great summe of mony which he had got together by beggynge in his use tyme, he bulideth a gate on the North side of the City, which to this day is called Cripple-gate.

From thence they went to the Tower of London, which was bulided by Julius Cesar, who was Emperour of Rome. And there they beheld salt & wine, which had lyen there euer since the Romans invaded this land, which was many yeres before our Sauour Christ was borne, the wine was gre wne so thicke, that it might haue bene cut like a jelly. And in that place also they saw the money that was made of leather, which in antient tyme went currant amongst the people.

When they had to their great contentation beheld all this, they repasche to their lodgings, having also a sumptuous supper ordained for them, with all delight that might bee. And you shall understand that when the Countrey weavers, which came vp with their dames, saw the weavers of candle-worke street, they had great desire presentely to haue some conference with them ; & thus one began to challenge the other saz workmanship : quoth Weafell, Ile walke with any of you all for a crowne, take me if you dare, & he that makes his yard of cloth senest, shall haue it. You shall be wrought withall, said the other, and if it were soz fer crownes : but we will make this bargaine, that each of vs shall winde the crowne quills. Content, quoth Weafell : and so to worke the went, but Weafell lost. Whereupon another of them tolde the matter in hand, who lost likewise : so that the London weavers triumphed against the Country, casting forth diuers crownes.

Alas poore fello ves, quoth ther, your hearts are god, but your hands are ill. Tush, the fault was in their legs, quoth another, pray you friend, were you not borne at home? Why doe you aske, quoth Weafell? Because, sayd he, the biggest place of your leg is next to your shooe.

Crabb hearing this, being a Cholerike of nature, chased like a man of Law at the Barre, the wages with them four crownes

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crownes to twaite : the others agrēd , to worke they goe: but  
Crab conque red them all. Whereupon the London Weaver  
were nyt in the head like birds, and had not a word to say.  
Now, saith Crab, as we haue lost nothing, so you haue wonne  
nothing, & because I know you cannot be right Weaver, ex-  
cept you be god fellowes, therfore if you will goe with vs, we  
will bestow the Ale vpon you. That is spoken like a god fel-  
low and like a Weaver quoth the other. So a longthey went  
as it were to the signe of the red Croffe

When they were set downe & had drunke well, they began  
merrily to prattle, and to extoll Crab to the skies. Where-  
upon Crab protested, that he would come and dwell among  
them. Nay that must not be, said a Lord ou Weaver: the  
King hath given vs priuilege, that none should lye among  
vs, but such as serue seuen yeras in London. With that Crab  
according to his old manner of prophetying, said thus:

**T**He day is very neere at hand,  
When as the King of this faire Land,  
Shal priuiledge you more then for:  
Then Weaver shall in skarlet goe;

And to one brotherhood be brought,  
The first that is in London wrought,  
When other Trades-men by your fame,  
Shall couet all to doe the same;

Then shall you all live wondrous well,  
But this one thing I shall you tell:  
The day will come before the doome,  
In Candle weeke-street shall stand no loome.

Now any Weaver dwelling there,  
But men that shall more credit beare:  
For Clothing shall be sore decayde,  
And men vndone that vse that trade.

And ynt the day some men shall see,  
This trade againe shall raised be.

When.

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When as Bayliffe of Sarum towne,  
Sall buy and purchase Bishops downe.

Where there never man did sow,  
Great store of goodly corne shall grow ;  
And Woad , that makes all colours found,  
Shall spring vpon that barren ground.

At that same day I tell you plaine,  
Who so aliae doth then remaine,  
A proper Maiden they shall see,  
Within the towne of Salisburie,

Offavour sweet and nature kind ,  
With goodly eyes , and yet starke blind ,  
This poore blind Maiden I doe say ,  
In age shall goe in rich array .

And he that takes her to his wife ,  
Shall lead a joyfull happy life ,  
The wealthiest Clothier shall he be ,  
That ever was in that Country .

But clothing kept as it hath beene ,  
In London never shall be seene :  
For weavers then the most shall win ,  
That worke for clothing next the skin .

Till pride the common-wealth doth peele ,  
And causeth hyswiues to leaue their wheele .  
Then pouerty vpon each side ,  
Vnto those workemen shall betide .

At that time from Eagles nest ,  
That proudly builded in the West ,  
A sort shall come wth cunning hand ,  
To bring strange weaving in this Land ,  
And by their gaines that great will fall ,  
They shall maintaine the Weavers Hall :  
But long they shall not flourishe so ,  
But folly will them ouerthrow .

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And men shall count it mickle shame,  
To bear that kind of Weavers name,  
And this as sure shall come to passe,  
As here is Ale within this glasse.

When the silly foutes that late about hym heard hym speake  
in this sort, men smilid, and bawured Crabbe say the same.  
Wher my spotters, say W eafell, doe you wonder at these  
wordes he will tell you twenty of these tales, for whiche cause  
we call him our cannes Prophete: his attire fits his title, said  
they, and we never heard the like in our threes: and if this should  
be true, it would be strange. Doubt not but it will be true, qu.  
W eafell; for he tell you what he did but once to our Nicke  
kisse Nel, and presently he pouezed out this rime:

That kisse, O N.<sup>r</sup>. God give thee joy,  
Will nine monthes hence breed thee a boy.

And he tell you when you shall heare: we kept reckoning,  
and it fell out as farr as Joane's buttocks on a close stalle, so  
which cause our matrons melle kisse a man in his sight: by  
on this they broke company, & went every one about his busi-  
nes, the London walke unto their frames, and the Country  
fellowes to their Dames, who after their great banqueting &  
merriment, went every one home to their own houses, though  
with lese money than they brought out, yet with more pride.

Especially Simons wife of Southampton, who told the rest  
of her godlyes, that she had no reason, but that their husbands  
should maintaine them, as well as the merchantes did their  
wives: for I tell you lasses, quoth she, we are as proper women  
(in my conceit) as the proudest of them all, as handsome of bo-  
dy, as faire of face, our legges as well made, and our srite as  
fine: then what reason is there (seeing our husbands are of as  
good measlē) but we should be as well maintained?

Say on say true godly, said Surtors wife: trust me, it made me  
blush, to see them byrde it out so gallanilly, and we to goe so  
homely: but before God, said the other, I will haue my hus-  
band to buy me a London goode, by which he shall haue lit-  
tle quiet, so shal mine late mother and mine too, qu. the thiro:  
and all of them sing the same note: so that when they came

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home, their husbands haue no little to doe : Especially Simon, whose wiffe dally lay of him so; London apparell, to whom he saud, God knowe, be content, let vs goe according to our place and ability : what will the Maisters thinks, if I shoule pranke thee up like a peacocke, and thou in thy attire surpassee their wifes: they would either thinke I were mad, or else that I had more money than I could well use: consider I pray thee good wife, that such as are in their yonge Masters, doe proue in their age starkie beggers.

Beside that it is enough to ralle me up in the Kings booke, so many times mens costers are hanged by their garments: why, we are Country folks, and must keepe our selues in god compasse: gray collet, and god hempe-spun cloth doth best become vs; I tell thee wife, it were as vndecent for vs to goe like Londoners as it is for Londoners to gue like courtiers,

What a coyl kepe you, quoth wive, not the Gods creatures as well as Londoners: and the Kings Citizens, as well as they: then finding our wealth to be as god as theirs, why should we not goe as gay as Londoners? So, husband no, here is the fault, wee are kept withoutit, onely because our husbands be not so kind as Londoners: why man, a Cobler there keperes his wife better than the best Clothier in this Countrey: now, I will affirme it, that the London Dryster-wives, and the very kitchen scullie cryers, doe exceede by half their handates attire: now, more than that, I did see the Water-bearer's wife which belongs to one of our Merchants, come in with a Tankard of water on her shoulder, and yet halfe a dozen gold rings on her fingers. You may then thinke, wife (quoth he) she got them not with tolentis.

But wife, you must consider what London is, the chiche and capitall City of all the Land, a place on the which all Strangers cast their eyes, it is (wote) the Kings Chamber and his Maisters royall feate: to that City repairer all Nationes under heauen. Therefore it is most meet and conuenient, that the Citizens of such a City should not goe in their apparell like Peasants, but for the credit of our Country, where such fynely habitts, as doe carry gentry and gemelli-

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wesse in the eyes of all beholders. But if it were not as great credit to the Land as  
the other : Woman, quod her husband, it is altogether naidesse,  
and in divers respects it may not be. Why then, I pray you,  
quoth she, let us goe a well at London. A word sone spoken,  
said her husband, but not so easle to be performed: therefore  
wile, I pray thee hold thy prating, for thy talkis swilish:  
yea husband, your old churlich condicions will never be left,  
you kepe me here like a bradge and a brolli, and so you may  
kepe your money in your purse, you care not for your credit,  
but before I will goe so like a shephearde, I will first goe  
naked: I tell you plaine, I scorne it greatly, that you shold  
clap a gray gowne on my back, as if I had not brought you  
two pence: before I was married, your wile I shold haue  
any thing that I requested, but now all is forgotten. And  
in saying this, she went in, and soon after she was so sickes that  
needs she must goe to bed: and when she was laid, she drake  
out that night with many grievous groanes, sighting and sob-  
bing, and no rest she could take God wot. And in the morning  
when she should rise, the god soule felte dolone in a smoune,  
which put her maidens in a great fright, who running downe  
to their master, cryed out: Alas, alas, our Dame is dead, our  
Dame is dead. At he god man hearing this, ran up in all hast  
and there felte to rubbing and chalting of her temples, sending  
for aqua vita, and sayng, Ah my S<sup>t</sup> wat<sup>r</sup> heart, speake to me,  
god wile, alache, alache: call in the neighbours, you queanes,  
quoth he. With that shalft by her head, fetching a great  
groane, and presently swooned agayne, and much adoe y wis  
he had to kepe life in her: but when she was come to her selfe,  
Ho in doss thou wile, quod he: what hast thou hane? for Gods  
sake tell me if thou hast a mind to any thing, thou shalt hane it  
A may dissembler (quod he) how can I beleue thee: thou hast  
said to me as much a hundred times, and deceived me, it is  
thy churlichnes that hath killed my wile, never was woman  
match to so unkind a man.

Nay, god wile, blame me not without cause; God know-  
eth how heartily I loue thee. Loue me no, thou dost never

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carry my loue but on the tip of thy tongue , quoth she . I dare  
swearre thou desirrest nothing so much as my death , and for my  
part I woulde to God thou hadst thy will ; but be content . I  
shall not trouble thee long : and with that loatching a sigh , she  
swouned and gave a great groane . The man leving her in this  
case , was wondrous woe : but so soon as thephad recovered  
her , he said , O my deare wife , if any bad conceit hath ingende-  
red this sicknesse , let me know it ; or if thou knowest any thing  
that may procure thy health , let me understand thereof and I  
protest thou shalt haue it , if it cost me all that ever I haue .

O husband , quoth she , how may I credit your wordes ,  
when so ; a paltry fute of apparel you deneyed me . Well wile  
quoth he , thou shalt haue apparel of any thing else thou wolt  
request , if God send thee once health . O husband , if I may find  
you so kind , I shall thinke my selfe the happiest woman in the  
world , thy wordes haue greatly conforted my heart , me think-  
eth if I had it , I could bylike a godly daught of wealthy wome .  
Well , wile was sent for ; O Lord saide she , that I had a peice  
of a chicken , I felamp stoniche delrous of some mente .  
O la am I of that , told her husband , and so the woman wile-  
in a few dayes after was very well .

But you shall vnde : I saw , that her husband was faine to  
dyes her London-like , ere he coulde get her quiet , neither would  
it please her except the stoffe was bought in Cheapefode : soz  
out of Cheapefode nothing would content her , were it never so  
god : insomuch , that if she thought a Tayloz of Cheapefode  
made not her gowne , she would fweare it were quite spoyle .

And having thus wonne her husband to her will , when the  
rest of the Clothiers wifes heard hereof , they wold be fated  
in the like sorte : so that euer since , the wifes of South-  
hampton , Salisbury , of Gloucester , of Worcester , and Reading ,  
went all as gallant and as biane as any Londoners wifes .

How the Clothiers sent the King aide into France , and how  
he overcame his brother Robert , and brought him into  
England , and how the Clothiers feasted his Majestie and  
his sonne at Reading . Chap . 7 .

The

## of Thomas of Reading.

The King, specially being at the wars in France against Lewin the French King, and Duke Robert of Normandy, sending for divers supplies of monyders out of England, the Clothiers at their owne proper cost set out a great number, and sent them over to the King.

Whiche Roger Bishop of Salisburie, who governed the Realme in the Kings absence, did certifie the King of, with his letters written in their commendations.

And afterward it came to passe, that God sent his Highnes victory over his enemies, and having taken his brother palsey, brought him most safelly with him into England, and appointed him to be kept in Corwicke Castle prisoner, yet with this lawesse, that he might hunt and hawke where he wold, up and downe the Country, and in this sort bee lived a god while, of whom we will speake more at large hereafter.

The King being thus come home, after his winters rest, he made his Summers progress into the west country, to take a view of all the chiese Townes: wherof the Clothiers being aduertised, they made great preparation against his coming, because he had promised to visit them all.

And when his Grace came to Reading, he was entertained and receiveth with great joy and triumph: Thomas Cole being the chiese man of regard in all the Towne, the King honored his house with his princely presence, where during the kings abode, he and his Son, and Nobles were highly feasted.

There the King beheld the great number of people, that was by that one man maintained in worke, whose heartly affection and loue toward his spakey did well appear, as wel by their outward countenances, as their gifts presented unto him. But of Cole himselfe the King was so well perswaded, that he committed much trust in him, & put him in great authority in the Towne. Furthermore the King said, That so the loue which those people bore him living, that hee would lay his bones among them when he was dead. For I know not, said he, where they may be better bestowed, till the blessed day of resurrection, then among these my friends which are likel to be happy partakers of the same.

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whereupon his spawdy causethers to be builded a most  
godly & famous Abey : he wryt we might be in his dedi-  
ction to God, by increasing his seruantes, and leane example to o-  
ffer his successors to doe the like. Likewise within the towne  
he after builded a faire & godly Castle, in the which he often  
kept his Court, which was a place of his cheste residence du-  
ring his life, saying to the Ciothiers that seeing he found them  
such faufull subiects, he woulde be their neighbour, and dwelle  
among them.

After his spawdies roiall seatting at Wending, he proade  
in progresse, till he had vistis the wholre waile country, be-  
ing wonderisly delighted, to see those people so diligent to ap-  
ply their busynesse, comming to Salisbury the Bishop recei-  
ued his spawdye with great ioy, and wylly triumph attayning  
on his Grace to his Palace, where his Highnesse boode.

There Sutton the Clothier presented his Highnesse with a  
broad cloth, of so fine a threed, and exceeding good maner-  
shipp, & there wiffall of so faire a colour, as his Grace gaue co-  
mmendation therof, and as it is said, he held it in such high esti-  
mation that thereof he made his Parliament robes, & the first  
Parliament that was ever in England, was graced with the  
Kings person in those robes, in requitall wherof his Highnesse  
afterward plesed Sutton many princely fauours.

And it is to be remembred, that Simon of South-hampton  
(seeing the King had overpast the place where he dwelt) came  
with his wife and seruants to Salisbury, and against the B.  
going sooth of that Cittie, he caues a most pleasant arbour to  
be made vpon the toppe of the hill leading to Walsallfe,  
beset all with red and white Roses, in such sorte, that not any  
part of the timber could be seene, without the which late a maid-  
den attired like a Quen, attended on by a faire traine of maidens,  
who at the Kings approach presented him with a Gar-  
land of sweet Royses, yielding him such honour as the Ladies  
of Rome were wont to doe to their Kings; incouter their victo-  
ries: which the King tolke in gracious part, and so, his fare-  
well from that Country, they boore him company ouer part of  
the plaine, with the sounde of divers sweet instruments of mu-  
sickie.

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¶ ¶ All which tyme his Grace dwelt two moneths done at the cost  
of a Clothier, he tolde he was the most honoured by those men,  
above all the mean subiects in his Realme, & to his Dignities post  
en to Exeter, having givyn great rewards to these maidens.

Thomas Done and the rest of the Clothiers, against his  
Graces comynge thither, had ordyned vñers sumptuous  
theves ; but there was one that presented the person of Au-  
gustus Cesar the Emperour, who commanded after the Ro-  
mane invasion, that their City shoulde be called Augusta , af-  
ter his owne name, which before tyme was called Ista , and of  
later paires, Exeter.

There his maestey was rounly feasted seuen dayes toge-  
ther , at the onely cost of Clothiers , but the other delights  
and sunday pastimes which they made there before the King,  
and his nobles, is too long here to be rehearsed , and therefore  
I will ouer passe them to avoide tediousnesse.

His grace ther conyng along the Country, at last came to  
Gloucester, an ancient City, which was builded by Glouc, &  
Wictor King, who named it after his owne name, Gloucester.  
Here was his maestey entertained by Gray the Clothier, who  
profest him selfe to be of that ancient family of Grayes, whose  
first originall stoned out of that ancient & Honourable Castle  
and towne of Kithyn.

Here was the King most bountifullly feasted, having in his  
company his brother Robert (aloughd his prisoner the same  
tyme.) And his Grace being desirous to see the maidens card  
and spayne , they were a purpose set to their woorke : among  
whom was faire Margaret with her white hand, whose excel-  
lent beauty haungh pierc't the eyes of the amorous Duke, it  
made such an impression in his heart, that after ward he could  
neuer forget her : and so vehemently was his affection kindled,  
that he coulde take no rest, All by wytting he had bewrayed  
his mind : but of this we will speake more in another place :  
and the King at his departure from that so grattis them, he  
would make his sonne Robert their Earle , who was the first  
Earle that euer was in Gloucester.

Sowyn when his Grace was come from hence, he went to  
Worcester,

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W<sup>E</sup>LL<sup>E</sup>SCHEFFER, before William Rame, all men made presentment to him all honours and dignities hee had, forasmuch as hee being borne of great parents, was not to lesse bold than any other his  
equall in his estimation of that famous Frenchman whose pa-  
trimony hee avenged the Colonies of Allemende, which Colone  
his predecessor had sumptuouslye built with stately walls of stone.

Although generall Report hath it otherwise reported on  
some of them, that their children were faine to become frach-  
men, whose burthen were to them in stead of lands, notwithstanding  
that King Edward against the time of his death, both by his  
great wealth and also to his posterity, whiche eldest son Henry,  
the Kinges successor, became afterwards the Mayor of Lon-  
don, who was the first spake, and such was in that City, who  
governed the shires : yea : and their master Roger Fitz-  
allen was the second spake.

The princely pleasure that in Wellsciffer there shal on the  
King, were many & marvellous, and none place but his gra-  
ce received more willingly then here : for the which at his de-  
parture hee shal be blinde very thankful. Now when his  
Grace had thus taken die in of all his good shemes westward,  
and in that progress had entered their Clothiers, he returned  
to London, with great joy of his Commons.

How Hodgkins of Halifax came to the Court, and complai-  
ned to the King, that his privilege was nothing worth,  
because when they found any offender, they could not get  
a hang-man to execute him : and how by a Fryer a gyn was  
devised to chop off mens heads of it selfe. Chap. 8.

A fter that Hodgkins had got the privilege for the towne  
of Halifax, to hang up such thieves as stole their cloth  
in the night, presently without any further amercement, all  
the Clothiers of the towne were veray glad thereon, and per-  
suaded themselves, that now their goods would be safe all night,  
without watching them at all, so that whereas before the towne  
maintained certayne watchmen to kepe their cloth by night,  
they were hereupon dismissed as a thing ridiculous to be done,  
supposing

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supposing with themselves, that seeing they should be straight hanged that were found faulty in this point, that no man would be so desperate to enterpise any such act. And indeed the matter being noysed through the whole Country, that they were strait to be hanged that use such thevery, it made many lewd liars to relate such thevery.

Nevertheless, there was at the same time living a notable Tharse named Wallis, whom in the North they call Migh-ty Wallis, in regard of his valour and manhood: This man being most subtle in such a kind of knavery, having heard of this late p̄fuslidge, and therewit shall of the Townes security, said that once he would venture his necke for a packe of Clothernes cloth: and therefore comming to one or two of his companions he asked if they would be partners in his adventure, *¶* If (quoth he) you will herein hazard your bodies, you shall be sharers in all our botties.

At length by many persuasions the men consented: whereupon late in the night, they got them all to a Farriours shop and called up the folkes of the house. What the loule ill wold you have (quoth they) at this time of the night? Wallis answere, saying, Good fellowes, we would have you to remoue the shooes of our boordes sake, and set them on againe, and so you patnes you shall be well pleased. The Smith at length was perswaded, and when he had pluckt off all the shooes from their boordes sake, they would needs haue them all set on againe quite contrary, with the cakins forward, that shoulde stand back ward, he sayng, say man, quod the Smith, are you like rules what the vicle doe you meane to b̄zeake your crags, god ffor I tro the man be won. Not so, so mith, quod they, doe thou as we bid thee, & thou shalt haue thy mony: so, it is an old proverbe,

Be it better, or be it worse,

Please you the man that beares the purse.

God ffor and sic I fall, quod the Smith, and so did as he was willed. Therben Wallis had shooes caused their boordes to be shod, to Hallifax they went, where they without any let, laded their boordes with cloth, and departed a contrary way.

In the morning, so soone as the Clothiers came to the field,

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they found that they were rob'd, whereupon one raine so mo-  
ther to tell these things. Now when Hodgekins heard therof,  
rising up in hast, he wyl'd his neighbours to marke and see, if  
they could not delvey either the lost steppes of men or bozles.  
Whiche being done, they perceaved that bozles had been there,  
and saking to pursue them by their lost steps, they went a  
cleane contrary way, by reason that the bozles were shodde  
backward: & when in vaine they had long pursued them, they  
returned, being never the neare. Now Wallis vsed this seate  
so long, that at length he was taken, and two more with him:  
wherupon according to the p̄fuslidge of the towne, they put  
Halters about the thairnes necks, presently to hang them vp.

When they were come to the place appointed, Wallis and  
the rest being out of hope to escape death, prepared them-  
selves patiently to suffer the rigor of the Law. And therewith  
the rest laying open the lewonesse of their life, gretously la-  
menting for his sinnes: at length commanding their soules to  
God, they yielded their bodies to the grane, at which sight  
the people were greatly moued with pitty, because they had  
never sene men to hanging before: but when they shold  
have ban tyed vp, Hodgekins willed one of his neighbours  
to play the Hang-mans part, who would not by any meanes  
doe it, althoogh he was a very pale man, who for his paines  
should haue been poestif of all their apparel. When he would  
not yield to the office, one of them whiche had his cloth solde,  
was commandyd to doe the deed; but he in like maner would  
not laying: When I haue the skill to make a man, I will  
hang a man, if chance my workmanship doe not like me.

And thus from one to another, the office of the Hang-man  
was posset off. At last a rogue came by, whom they would  
haue compellid to haue done that deed. Nay, my masters, quod  
he, not so: but as you haue got a p̄fuslidge for the towne, so  
you were best to procure a commission to make a hang-man,  
or else you are like to be without so me. Right so Hodgkins  
quoth one, I pray you doe this office your selfe, you haue had  
most losse, and therefore you shold be the most ready to hang  
them your selfe. No, not I (quoth Hodgkins) though my losse  
were

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were ten times greater then it is, notwithstanding look which  
of these Thieves will take upon hym to hang the other, shall  
have his life saved, other wise they shall all to prison till I can  
prouide a hangman.

When Wallis saw the matter brought to this passe, he be-  
gan stonely to reply, saying, my masters of the Cowne of Ha-  
llifax, though your privilege stretch to hang men by presently  
that are found stealing of your gods, yet it gues you no war-  
rant to impynson them till you prouide them a hang-man: my  
selfe, with these my fellowes, haue here yelde our selues to  
satissfe the Law, and if it be not performed, the fault is yours,  
and not ours, and therfore we humbly take our leane: from  
the galloves the xviij. of August. And with that he leapt from  
the ladder, and hurl'd the halter at Hodgekius face.

When the Clothiers saw this, they knew not what to say,  
but taking them by the sleeves, extreated to haue their owne  
againe. Not so, qd. Wallis, you get not the value of a packe of  
a ba bby: we haue stolne your cloth, then why doe you not  
hang vs? here we haue made our selues ready, and if you wil  
not hang vs, chuse. A plague vpon you, qd. he, you haue him-  
died me God knowes what; I made accound to dine this day  
in heauen, and you keape me here on earth where there is not  
a quarter of that god cheare. The oule enwill take you all. I  
was fullie prouided to give the galloves a box on the eare, and  
now God knowes when I shall be in so god a mind againe:  
and so he with the rest of his compaionors departed.

When Hodgekins saw, that notwithstanding their Thie-  
very, how they flouted at their lenity, hee was much moued  
in minde: and as he stood in his dumpes chowing his end, ma-  
king his dinner with a dish of melancholy, a gray Fryer reu-  
erently saluted him in this sort: All halfe, god-man Hodge-  
kins, happiness and health be ever with you, and to all sup-  
pressoys of leyd liuers, God send everlasting joyes.

I am sooy god-man Hodgekins, that the great palnesledge  
which our King gaue to this towne, comes to no greater pur-  
pose: better fare had it beens that it had never beene granted  
then so lightly regarded: the towne hath suffred through their

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owne penitnesse, an everlasting reuouch this day, onely because foolish pity hath hindred Justice.

Consider, that compassion is not to be had vpon theenes and robbers; plesly onely appertaineth to the vertuous sort, who are ouerwhelmed with the wanes of misery & mischance. What great cause of boldnesse haue you gosen to bad liuers, by letting these fellowes thus to escape, & how shall you now keepe your goods in safety, seeing you fullfille not the law which shoulde be your defensce? never thinks that theues will make any conscience to carry away your goods, whiche they haue thenselues in no danger of death, who haue more cause to prattle your plesly, then commendo your wisedome: wherefore in tyme to keepe to prevent the ensuing euill.

For my owne part, I haue that care of your god, that I would worke all god meaneies for your benefite, and yet not so much in respect of your profit, as also the desire I haue to vphold Justice, and seeing I find you and the rest so womanish, that you could not find in your hearts to hang a thefe, I haue devised how to make a gin, that shall cut off their heads without mans helpe, and if the King will allow thereof.

When Hodgeskins heard this, he was soms what comforted in mind, and said to the Fryer, that if by his cunning he could perforne it, he would once againe make late to the King to haue his grant for the same. The Fryer willed him to haue no doubt in him: and so when he had devised it, he got a Carpenter to framme it out of hand.

Hodgeskins in the meane time posted vp to the Court, and told his Maiesy that the punishment of Hallifax was not worth a pudding. All by so, said the King: Because, quoth Hodgeskins, we can get never a hangman to trauell threes: but if it shall like your god Grace, (quoth he) there is a feare Fryer, that will make vs a deuice, which shall without the hand of man cut off the craggis of all such carles, if your Majestie will please to allow thereof.

The King vnderstanding the full effect of the matter, at length granted his petition: where upon till this day, it is observed in Hallifax, that such as are taken stealynge of their cloth, haue their heads choppt off with the same gin. How

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How the Bailiffes of London could get no man to bee a Catchpole, and how certaine Flemings tooke that office upon them, whereof many of them were fled into this Realme, by reason of certaine waters that had drowned a great part of their Country. Chap. 9.

The City of London being at that time gouerned by Baillifses, it came to passe, that in a certayne day two of their Catch-poles were killed, soz at that time they had not the name of Sergeantts: and you shall understand, that their office was then so much hated and detested of Englishmen, that none of them would faine it vpon them: so that the Baillifses were glad to get any man whatsoever, and to giue him certayne wages to performe that office.

It came to passe, as I said before, that two of their Officers by arresting of a man, were at one instant slaine, by meanes wherof the Baillifses were enforced to seeke others to put in their romes, but by no meanes they could get any, wherefore according to their wonted manner, they made proclamation, that if there were any man y wold present himselfes before them, they shold not onely be sethed in that office during their lues, but also shold haue such maintenances and allowance, as soz such men was by the City prouided: & notwithstanding that it was an office most necessary in the Common wealth, yet did the poorest wretch despise it, that liued in any estimation among his neighbours.

At last, a couple of Flemings, which were fled into this Land, by reason that their Country was drown'd with the sea, hearing the proclamation, offered themselves vnto the Baillifses, to serve in this place, who were presently received and accepted, & according to other had garments giuen them, whch were of 2. colo:rs, blue & red, their coates, bretches, & stockings, whereby they were knowynge and discerned from other men.

Within halfe a yere after, it came to passe, that Thomas Dove of Exeter came vp to London, who having by his tollsy and godfellowship, brought himselfe greatly behind hand,

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was in danger to divers men of the City, among the rest, one of his Creditors sent an officer to arrest him. The Dutchman that had not binne long experiented in such matters, and hearing how many of his felawes had bin killed for attempting to arrest men, was quivering and quaking in a corner of the street to watch for Thomas Doue, and having long waited, at length he spied him: whereupon he prepared his mace ready, and with a pale countenance proceeded to his office; at what time comming behind the man, suddenly with his mace he knocked him on the pate, saying. Arrest you, giving him such a blow, that he fel'd him to the ground.

The Catchpole thinking he had killed the man, left his mace behind him and ranne away: the Creditor he ran after him, calling and crying that he should turne againe: But the Fleming would not by any meanes turne backe, but got him quite out of the City, & took Sanctuary at Westminister.

Doue being come to himselfe, arose and went to his Inn no man hindring his passage, being not a little glad he so escaped the danger. Yet nevertheless, at his next comming to London, another Catchpole met with him, and arrestes him in the Kings name.

Doue being dismayed at this mischievous mischance, knew not what to doe: at last hee requested the Catchpole that hee would not violently cast him in prison, but stay till such time as he could send for a friend to be his surety; and although kindness in a Catchpole be rare, yet was he won with faire words to doe him this fauour: whereupon Doue desired one to goe to his Dark Larrat, who immedately came with him & offered himselfe to be Doves surety.

The Officer, who never saw this man before, was much amazed at his sight: for larrat was a great and mighty man of body, of countenance grim, and exceeding big of stature, so that h Catchpole was wonderfully afraid, asking if he could find never a surety, but the diuell, most fearfully intreating him to conture him away, and he would doe Doue any fauor, what will you not take my word, quod larrat sir, quod h Catchpole, if it were so, any matter in hel, I would take your word

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as sone as any duell in that place, but syng it is soz a matter  
on earth, I would gladly haue a surely.

Whyn thou whozon cricket, (quoth Jarra) thou maggal,  
ape, thou splinter, thou paulyry spider, doest thou take me soz  
a duell? Wherab, take my wrod, I charge thee, for this man, or  
else godman butter fly, Ile make thee repentit. The Officer,  
whyle he was in the house, said, he was content, but as sone as  
he came into the straet, he cryed, saying: Help, helpe, god  
neighbours, or else she duell will carry away my psonner:  
notwithstanding, there was not one man would stir to be the  
Catchpyles aide, whiche when he saw, he take fast hold on  
Thomas Dove, and would not by any meanes let him goe.

Jarrat seeing this, made no moze adoe, but comming to the  
Officer, gane him such a fillip on the lozehead with his fin-  
ger, that he fell'd the pore Fleming to the ground: and whyle  
he lay in the straet stretching his hales, Jarrat took Dove  
under his arme and carried him home, where he thought him  
selfe as safe, as King Charlemaine in Mount-alban.

The next morning Jarrat conveyed Dove out of Towne,  
who afterward kept him in the Countrey, and came no moze  
in the Catchpyles clawes.

How Duke Robert came a wooing to Margaret with the  
white hand, and how he appointed to come and steale her  
away from her Masters. Chap. 10.

**T**he beautifull Margaret, who had now dwelt with her  
Dame the space of soure yeres, was highly regarded  
and secretly beloues of many gallant & worthy Gentlemen  
of the Country, but of two most especially, Duke Robert, and  
Sir William Ferris. It chanced on a time, that faire Margar-  
ret with many other of her Masters folkes, went a hay-mak-  
ing, attired in a red stammell petticoate, and a broad strawen  
hat upon her head, she hat also a hay-forke, and in her lappe  
she did carry her breake-sax. As she went along, Duke Ro-  
bert, with one or two of his Duperes, met with her, whose  
amiable sight so now shew reinkinde y secret fire of loue,

which

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which long lay smothering in his heart. Till herfore meeting  
her so happily, he saluted her thus friendly.

Faire spacio god morrow, are you walking so diligently to  
your labour? Needs must the weaver be faire, when the sun  
shines so cleare, and the hay wholesome that is dyed with such  
splendent rayes. Renowned and most noble Duke (god, the)  
poore haruest folkes pray for faire weather, and it is the labo-  
rers comfort to see his woorke prosper, and the more happy may  
we count the day, that is blessed with your princely presence:  
but moze happy, said the Duke, are they which are conuersant  
in thy company. But let me intreat thee to turne backe to thy  
masters with me, and commit thy woorke to some that are fitter  
for such toyle: trust me, me thinkes thy Dame is too much ill  
advised, in letting thee to such homely busnes. I muse thou  
canst indeare this vise besoming seruitus, whose delicate hirus  
were never fram'd to proue such painfull experiments.

Albeit, quoth she, it becommeth not me to controule your  
judicall thoughts, yet, were you not the Duke, I would say,  
your opinion deceiu'd you: though your faire eyes seemed  
cleare, yet I daime the unperforat they cast before your mind  
any shadow or sparkie of beautie in me: But I rather thinke,  
because it hath been an old saying, that women are prouide  
to heare themselves praised, that you either speake this to dye  
away the time, or to wryng from me my too apparent imper-  
fections. But I humbly intreats pardon, too long haue I sole-  
lized my busnesse, and shewre withal, with a courtly grace, bending her  
knees to the courteous Duke, she went forwarde to the field,  
and the Duke to the towne of Gloucester.

When he came thither, he made his keepers great cheare, in  
treating them they would give him respit to be awhile with  
old Gray; for we twaine must have a game or two, quoth he:  
and for my safe returne, I gage to you my princely word, that  
as I am a true Knight and a Gentleman, I will returne safe  
to your charge againe.

The keepers being content, the Duke departed, and with  
old Gray goes to the field, to peruse the woijkefolkes, wheres-  
while

of Thomas of Reading.

while Gray found himself busie in many matters, he take opportunity to talk with Margaret; this who by his letters before lyes p[ro]mise to his purpose; guest before shewd the cause of his comming to whom he spake to this effect:

Faire sp[irit], I die long since manifest my loue to th[er]e by my letter; tell me therfore, were it not better to be a Dutches then a D[omi]n[es]e: a Lady of high reputation, then a servant of ample degr[ee]: with me thou myghtest liue in pleasure, where here thou dauest thy dayes sooth in paine; by my loue thou shouldest be made a Lady of great treasures: where now thou art poore and beggerly; all manner of delights shouldest then attend on th[er]e, and whairooner thy heart desirtest, thou shouldest haue: wherefore sith[en] it lies in thy owne choice, make thy selfe happy, by consenting to my wiste.

Sir, (quoth he) I confess your loue deserves a wiste: your affection a faithful friend, such a one as coulde haue but one heart and minde of two hearts & bodies; but faire b[ea]utifit it is that the Tortle shouldest match with the Eagle, though her loue be never so pure, her louings are unfit to mount so high. While Thales gazed on the staires, he founblede in a pit. And they that clime b[ea]utifully, catch a fall sudde[n]ly: what availeth high dignify in time of aduersity? It neither helpeth the sorrow of the heart, nor remoues the bodies misery: as for wealth & treasure, what are they, but fortunes bautes to bring men in danger: god for nothing but to make people forget themselves: whereas you alledge poverty to be a hinderer of the hearts comfort, I find it my selfe contrary, knowing moore surely to rest under a simple habit, then a royall Robe: and verily there is none in the world poore, but they that think themselves poore: for such as are endued with content, are rich having nothing els; but he that is possessed with riches, without content, is most wretched and miserable. Wherefore most noble Duke, albeit I account my selfe univaythy of your best fynes, yet I would desire you to match your loue to your like, and let me rest to my rake, and bise my so[n]ke for my living.

Consider faire Margaret, (quoth he) that it lies not in mans power to place his loue where he list, being the worte of an

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Whch delly. A bird was never fene in Irontus, no true loue ha  
t a fating mind: nemet shall remoue the affection of my heart  
whch in nature resembleth the stone Adison, whose fire can  
never be coled: wherefore stout Spalden giveth not obstatte  
deniall, where gentle acceptance ought to be received.

Failes sir (quoth he) consider what high displeasure may rise  
by a rash match, what danger a Kings trounes may b<sup>e</sup>ad, my  
worthles matching with your Royalty, may perhaps regaine  
your liberty, & hazard my life; then call to mind how little  
you should enjoy your loue, or I my wedded Lord.

The Duke at these words made this reply, that if she conser-  
ted, she shold not b<sup>e</sup>ad any danger. The thunder (quoth he)  
is driven away by ringing of belles, the Lions wrath qual-  
ified by a yielding body: how much mo<sup>e</sup> a Brothers anger  
with a Brothers entreaty. By me he bath receiveth many fa-  
vours, and never yet did he requite any one of them: and who  
is ignorant that the princely Croon which overmeth his head  
is my right: all which I am content he shall still enjoy, so he  
requite my kindnesse. But if he shold not, then would I be  
like those men (that easing of the triste Lutes) forget the Com-  
try where they were boorne, and never more shold this clime  
cover my head, but with thee wold I live in a strange Land,  
being better content with an ege, in thy company, then with  
all the delicates in England.

The Spalden hearing this, who with many other words  
was long iomed, at last consented, where yielding to him her  
heart with her hand, he departed, appointing to certifie her  
from Cardisse Castle, what determination he wold follow:  
so taking his leave of Gray, he went to his brothers, and with  
them passed to Cardisse.

Now it is to be remembred, that sir William Ferrers with-  
in a day or two after came unto Grayes house, as it was his  
ordinary custome, but not so much plesis for Grayes company  
as for the mind he had to Margareta his s<sup>e</sup>ster, who although  
he were a married man, and had a faire Lady to his wife, yet  
he laid her sieges to the soft of his spaldens charkit, haing  
with many faire wordes sought to allure her, & by the offer of  
landly rich gifts to temp<sup>e</sup> her; but when she sayd, that by a hys  
v<sup>e</sup>de

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vied denials she coulde not be rid of him. She now chanced on a sudden to give him such an answer, as drove him from a despit into such a conceit, as never after that time he troubled her.

Sir William Ferrers being very importunate to have her grant his desire, and when after sundry assaults she gave him still the repulse, hee would needes know the reason why she would not loue hym: quoth he, If thou dealest but consider who he is that seeketh thy fauour, what pleasure he may doe thee by his purse, and what credit by his countenance, thou waldst never stand on such nice points. If I be thy friend, who dare be thy foe? and what is he that will once call thy name in question for any thing? therfore sweet girl, be better aduised, and refuse not my offer being so large.

Truly sir William (quoth he) though there be many reasons to make me deny your suite, yet is there one above the rest that causes me I cannot loue you. Now I pray thee, my wench let me know that. o'oth he, and I wll amend it whatsoever it be. Pardon me sir, said Margaret, if I should speake my mind, it wold possibly offend you, & doe me no pleasure because it is a defect in nature, whch no phisiche can cure. Sir William hearing her say so, being abashed at her speach, said, Fair Margaret, let me (if I may obtaine no more at thy bands) yet intreat thee to know what this defect shoulde be, I am not wry-neckt, crook-legd, stub-fated, lame-handed, nor blaire-eyed: what can make this mislike? I never knew any body that fooke exceptions at my person before.

And the more sorry am I, quoth he, that I was so malapert to speck it, but pardon me my presumption, god sir William, I wold I had bene like the stroke tonguelesse, then shoulde I never have caused your disquiet. Say sweet Margaret, quoth he, tell me deare loue, I command thy singlenesse of heart, god Margaret speake. God sir William let it rest, quoth he, I know you will not belene it when I haue revealed it, neither is it a thing that you can helpe: and yet such is my scollishnesse, had it not bene so, that, I thinke verily I haue granted your suite ere now: But sayng you vige me so

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much to know what it is, I will tell you : It is sir, your ill-favoured great nose, that brings sagging lothlymely to your lips, that I cannot think in my heart so much as to hitte you.

Tel bat, my nose, quoth he : is my nose so great and I never knew it certeinly? I thought my nose to be as comely as any mans : but this it is, we are all apt to think well of our selues, and a great venle be: fer than we ought : but let me see ; my nose ! by the waile tis true, I doe now seale it my selfe : God Loide, how was I blinde before ? Herenpon it is certaine, that the knyght was bylde into such a conceit, as none could perswade him but his nose was so great indeed, his Lady, or any other that spake to the contrary, he wold say they wers flatterers, and that they lyuu, in somuch that he wold be ready to scrike some of them that commenred his speake well of his nose. If they were men of worship, or any other that confrimed him in his opinion, he wold swerte they flouted him, and he ready to challenge them the feld. He became so abashed of himselfe, that after that day hee wold never goe abroad, whereby Margaret was well rid of his company.

On a time, a wylde and gravis Gentleman sittynge hym groundyngh in his conceit to strongly, gane his Lady counsell, not to contrarie him thereth, but rather say that she wold leke out some curring physician to cure him : so, said he, as sir William hath taken this conceit of himselfe, so is he likely never to bearre other opinion, till his owne counsell doth remoue it, the which must be wyllyng wrought to bring it to passe.

Tel herenpon the Lady having conferred with a physician that bare a great name in the countrey, hee undertake to remoue this som conceit by his skill. The day being appointed when the physician shoulde come, and the knyght being told thereof, for very ioy he wold goe sooth to mete him: when a woman of the towne sat to the knyght haunghing heare what mnyt went because of his nose, she lokid very neadly upon him: the knyght, taking his eye upon her, steyng her to gaze so wyllyng in his face, with an angry countenance sayd thus to her, Wifly, how now god hyswif, cannot you get you about your busyness ? The woman being a syfelid queane, answe-

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ted him cuttedly, So mary can I not qd she, So, you drab,  
what is the caule, said the Knight : Be caule, quoth she, your  
nose standes in my way : wherewith the Knight being very  
angry, and abashed, went backe againe to his houle.

The Physician being come, he had filled a certayne blad-  
der with shepes blood, and conneyed it into his sorne, where  
at the issue of the bladder he had put in a piece of a swans quill  
through the which the blad should ranne out of the bladder so  
close by his hand, that he holding the Knight by the nose, it  
might not be perceaved, but that it issued thence. All things  
being prepared, hee told the Knight, that by a soule corrupt  
blod wherewith the veines of his nose were ouer-charged, this  
impediment did grow, theresoar, quoth he, to have redresse for  
this disease, you must haue a vein opened in your nose, whence  
this soule corruption must be taken : whereupon it will fol-  
low, that your nose will fall againe to his naturall propensi-  
on, and never shall you bee troubled with this grieve any  
more, and therepon will I gage my life.

I pray you master Doctor, said the Knight, is my nose so  
big as you make it : With reverence I may speake it, said the  
Physician, to tell the truth, and another flattery, I never saw  
a moxe mishappen nose so soule to sight. Lo you now apadan,  
quoth the Knight, this is you that said my nose was as well,  
as hamsome, and as comely a nose as any mans.

Alas sir, qd. shee, I speake it (God wot) because you should  
not grieve at it, nor take my words in ill part, neither did it  
indeed become me to mislike of your nose.

All this we will quicly remedy, said the physician, haue no  
doubt : and with that, he very orderly pikkid him in the nose,  
but not in a deince whereby he might blad : and presently ha-  
ving a tricke finely to vnskop the quill, the blod ranne into a  
bason in great abundance ; and when the bladder was empty,  
and the bason almost full, the Physician seemed to close the  
veine, and asked how hee felt his nose, shewing the great  
quantite of filthy blod which from thence he had taken.

The Knight beholding it with great wonder, said, he thought  
that no man in the world had bene troubled with such abu-

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Bursts of corrupt blood in his whole body, as lay in his miss hapen nose, and there withall he began to touch and handle his nose, saying, that he felt it mightly assavaged. Immediately a glasse was brought wherein he might behold himselfe. *Per  
marry, qd.* he now I prasse God, I see my nose is come into some reasonable proportion, and I seele my selfe very well eas'd of the burthen thereof; but if it continue thus, that's all. I will warrant your worship, said the Physician, soz ever being troubled with the like againe. Whereupon the Knight receiued great joy, and the Doctor a bighreward.

How *Thomas of Reading* was murdered at his Oasts house of Colebrooke, who also had murdered many before him, and how their wickednesse was at length reucaled. Chap. 11.

**T**homas of Reading haing many occasions to come to London as well about his own affaires, as also the Kings busynesse, being in a great office vnder his Matessie, it chanced on a time, that his host and his hostesse of Colbroke, wherough conefonnesse had murdered many of the guests, and haing every time he came thither great stoe of his mony to lay vp, appointed him to be the next fat pig that shold be killed: Soz it is to be understand, that when they plotted the murder of any man, this was alwaies their terme, the man to his wife, and the woman to her husband: wifre, ther is now a fat pig to be had if you want one. Whereupon she would answer thus, I pray you put him in the hogstie till to morrow. This was, when any came thither alone without others in his company, and they saw he had greate stoe of money.

This man shold be then laid i the chamber right ouer the kitchin, which was a faire chamber, & better set out then any other in the house: the bedstead therin, though it were little and low, yet was it most cunningly caried, and faire to the eye, the let thereof were fast nailed to the chamber faire, in such sort, that it could not in any wise fall, the bed that lay therein was fast sowled to the sides of the bedstead: moreover, that part of the chamber wherenpon this bed and bed-

of Thomas of Reading.

Dead stod, was made in such sort, that by the pulling out of two yron pynes belou in the kitchin, it was to be let downe and taken up by a draw-bridge, or in manner of a trap-dowzer moreouer in the kitchin, directly under the place where this shold fall, was a myghty great caldron, wherein they vded to seth ther lquor when they went to boyl vng. Now, the men appointed for slaugter, were laid into this bed, and in the dead time of the night when they were sound asleepe, by plucking out the soresaid yron pynes, downe will the man fall out of his bed into the boylung caldron, and all the cloths that wers vpon him: where being suddenly scalded and drowned, he was never able to cry or speake one word.

Then had they a little ladder ouer standing ready in the kitchin, by the which they presently mounted into the said chamber, and there closely take away the mans apparell, as also his money, in his malle or cap-case: and then lifting vp the said scalding stowre which hung by hinges, they made it fast as before.

The dead body would they take presently out of the caldron, & shew it downe the tuer, which ran nere vnto their house; whereby they escaped all danger.

Now if in the moring any of the rest of the gueulls that had talkt with the murdered man dre eve, chanceth to aske for him, as having occasion to ride the same way that he shoud haue done, the god-man would answere, that he tolde horse a good whille before day, and that he himselfe did set him forwarde: the horse the god-man would also take out of the stable, & conuay him by a hay-barne of his, that stood from his house a mile or two, wherof himselfe did always kepe the ketes full charly, and when any hay was to be brought from thence, with his owne hands he woulde deluer it: then before the horse shoud goe from thence, he woulde dismarke him: as if he wgre a long fasse, he woulde make him curtail: or else crop his eares or cut his mane: or put out one of his eyes; and by this meanes hee kept himselfe unkholone.

Now, Thomas of Reading, as I sayd before, being markt, & kept for a fat pig, he was laid in the same chamber of death, but by reason Gray of Gloucester chanced also to come that night, he escaped scalding.

The

## The pleasant History

The next time he came he was laid there agayne, "but before he fell asleep, or was warme in his bed, one came riding thoroþ the Towne and cryed pitously, that London wa: all on a fire, and that it had burned downe Thomas Beckets house in Wall-cheape, and a great number more in the same street and yet ( quoth he ) the fire is not quenched.

In which tidings when Thomas of Reading heard, he was very sorowfull, soz of the same Becket that day he had receiued a great piece of money, and had left in his house many of his writings, and some that appertained to the King also: therfore there was no way but he would ride back againe to London presently, to see how the matter stood, therupon making himselfe ready, departed. This crosse fortune caused his Dass to strokone, nevertheless the next time ( qd. he ) will pay for all

Notwithstanding God so wrought, that they were preuenfed then like wise, by reason of a great trap that hapned in the house betwixt a couple that sell out at vlice, in somuch as the murdereres themselves were inforged to call him by being a man in great authority, that he might set the house in quietnesse, out of h whch by meane of this quarell, they doubted to lose many things.

Another time when hee shold haue bïeng laid in the same place, he fell so sick, that he requested to haue some body to watch with hym, whereby also they could not bring their vise purpose to passe. But hard it is to escapa the ill sortunes wherunto a man is allotted: soz albeit that the next time that he came to London, his horse stumbled & broke one of his legs, as he shold ride homeward, yet hired he another to halfe his owne death, soz there is no remedy but he shold goe to Colibroke that night: but by the way he was heavy alayne, that he could scant kepe hymselfe in the saddle, and when he came thare to the Towne, his nose burst ouf suddenly a bleeding.

Well, so his Ianne he came, and so heavy was his heart that he coulde eate no meat: his Dass & Dassesse hearing he was so melancholy, came vp to cheare hym, saying, Jesus Master Cole, what ailes you to night: never did we see you thus sad besoþe: will it please you to haue a quart of burnt sucke, with

## of Thomas of Reading.

a god will ( quoth he ) am I wrold to God Tom Done here , he wrold surely make me merry , & me shold a lache no mischance but I am sorry for the man with all my heart that he is come to farrre behind hand : but alas , somuch can every man say , but what god both it him . No , no , it is not words can helpe man in this case , the man bath need of other relesse ther so . Let me sive : I have but one child in the world , and that is my daughter , and halfe that I have is hers , the other halfe my wifes . But then : shall I be god to no body but them ? In confidence , my wealth is too much for a couple to possesse , and what is one religion without charite , and to whom is charity more to be shewne , than to decaid house-holders .

God my Dass lend me a pen and ink , and some paper , so I will write a letter unto the p[ro]p[ri]e man straight : & something I will give him : That almes which a man bestowes with his oþer hands , he shall be sure to have delvered , and God knowes how long I shall live .

With that , his Daſtelle vnderstandingly unanswered , ſaying , Doubt not , master Cole , you are like enough by the course of nature to live many yeeres : God knowes ( quoth he ) I never ſeene my heart ſo heauy before . By this time pen , ink , & paper was brought , ſetting himſelfe to writing as followeth .

In the name of God , Amen . I bequeath my ſoule to God & my body to the ground , my goods equally between my wife Elenor and Isabell my daughter . Item I give too Thomas Done of Exeter one hundred pounds , nay that is to little , I giue to Thomas Done two hundred pounds in money , to be paid vnto him preſently vpon his demand thereof by my ſaid wife and daughter .

Ha , how ſay you Dass ( qd. be ) is not this well ? I pray you read it . His doyle looking thereon , ſaid , why master Cole , what haue you written here ? you ſaid you wrold write a letter , but methinks you haue made a v[er]y ill ; what ned haue you to doe thus ? thanks be to God , you may liue many ſayre yeeres . It is true ( quoth Cole ) if it please God ; & I truft this writing cannot cheſten my daſt but let me ſee , haue I made a v[er]y ill ? Now I promife you , I do verily purpose to write a

letter

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letter: nor is it touching, I have written that that God put it  
to my mind: but take once againe my Dast, is it not written there,  
that Dove shall haue two hundred pounds, to be paid  
when he comes to demand it: yes indeed, said his Dast, yet  
then all is well, saide Cole, & it shall goe as it doth me. I will  
not bestow the new writing therof any more.

I had folowing it up, he fested it, desiring that his Dast would  
send it to Greter, he promised that he wold not withhold it: and  
Cole was not satisfied: but after some pause, he would needs  
bid me to carry it. And so setting deuine fayre in his shire againe,  
byon a sudden he burst forth a weeping, ther demanding  
the cause thereof, he spake as followeth:

It's cause of these leaves I know but it comes now into my  
mind ( said Cole ) when I set toward this my last journey to  
London, how my daughter take on, what a couple she kept to  
have me stay: and I could not be rid of the little baggage a  
long time, she did so hang about me: when her mother by  
violente took her away, she cried out most mainly, O my father,  
my father, I shall never see him againe.

Alas, pretty soule, into his Dastesse, this was but madnesse  
in the girle, and it seemeth she is very fond of you. But  
alas, why shold you grieve at this? you must consider that  
it was but chidlynesse. I, it is trueed, said Cole, and with  
that he began to nod. Then they asked him if he wold goe to  
bed. No, said he, although I am heavy I haue no mind to goe  
to bed at all. Wherif that certaine muscians of the towne came  
to the chamber, and knowing speller Cole was there, brougut  
out their instruments, and very solemnly began to play.

This muscike comes very well ( said Cole ) and when he had  
listned a whil therunto, he said, She thinkes she is in curmels  
sound like the ring of St. Mary Overies bellis, but the Base  
wistles all the rest: & in my eare it goes like a bell that rings  
a sorrowfull knell, for Gods sake let them leave off, and bearce  
them this simple reward. The spudlers being gone, his  
Dast asked if now it wold please him to go to bed, for (quoth  
he) it is neare eleven of the clocke.

wherif that Cole beholding his Dast & Dastelle earnestly,  
begun to start backe, saying, what alle you to like to like pale  
death,

of Thomas of Reading.

Besly, god Lord, what haue you done, that your hands me  
this blouoy? what my harts, said his Daſt, All by you may ſit,  
they are neither blouoy nor ſoule; either your eyas do greatly  
darell, or alſe vnicies of a troubled minde doe delude you.

Aglas, my Daſt, you may ſit, ſayd he, holm weake my wits  
are, I never had my head ſo hole beforze. Come, let me drinke  
once more, and then I will to bed, and trouble you no longer.  
With that he made himſelfe vntreay, and his Daſtelle was  
very diligent to warme a kerchiefe, and put it about his heaſ.  
God Lord, ſayd he, I am not ſicks, I prayſe God, but ſuch an  
alteration I find in my ſelfe as I never did before.

With that the ſcrich-owle cried plifuously, and anon after  
the night-rauon ſate coarcking hard by his windowe. Ifeu haue  
mercy vpon me, quoth he, what an ill-fauoured cry doe yonder  
carriion bird make, and there withall he laſt him dolyne in his  
bed, from whence he never roſe againe.

His Daſt and Daſtelle, that all this while noted his troubled  
minde, began to commune betwixt themſelves thereof. And  
the man ſaid, he knew not what were best to be doſs. By  
my conſent (quoth he) the matter ſhould paſſe, for I thinke  
it is not best to meddle on him. What man (quoth the) ſaint  
you now haue done ſo many and do you ſh; make at this?  
When ſhe ſtole him a great deale of gold which Cole had left  
with her, ſhe ſaid, would it not grieve a boodes heart to leſe  
this? haung the old churle, what ſhould he doe liuing any long-  
er? he hath too much, and we haue too little: but husband, let  
the thing be doſe, and this is our owne.

Her wicked counſell was folloƿed, and when they had lift-  
ed at his chamber doore, they heard the man found alſeape:  
All is ſafe, quoth they, and doione into the kitchein they goe  
their ſervants being all in bed, and pulling out the yron pins,  
doione ſell the bed, and the man dropt out into the boylng-  
thaldeyn. He being dead, they betwixt them caſt his body into  
the riuere, his clothes they made away, & made all things as it  
ſhould be: but when he came to the Rable to conney thence  
Coles hoſte, the ſtable doore being open, the hoſte had got  
lufe, and with a part of the halter about his necke, and ſtrai-

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denked under his belly, as the Officers had doctord him before he was gone out of the back-side, which led into a great field leading to the houſe, and ſo leaping divers bridges, being alwaies about houſe, had got into a ground where a Mare was grazing, with whom he kept ſuch a coplē, that they got into the high-way, where one of the Towne maſting them, knew the Mare, & brought her and the houſe to the man that owed her.

In the meane space, the Apothecaries had been at the Inne, and in requitall of their evenings gift, they intended to giue Cole ſome mifteke in the morning. The good-man told them he took houſe before day : likewife there was a guest in the houſe that would haue houſe him company to Reading, unto whom the Duke alio anſwered, that he himſelfe let him upon houſe-backe, and that he went long agoe. Amon came the man that owed the mare, inquiring up and downe, to know and ſe none of them miffed a houſe, who ſaid no. At the laſt he came to the signs of the Crane wher Cole lay, and calling the Officers, he demanded of them if they lacked houſe, they ſaid no : Wherby then ſayd the man, I perſerve my Mare is good for ſomething, ſo I ſent her to field ſingle, ſhe will come home double : thus it paſted on all that day and the night following. But the next day after, Coles wife mifting that her husband came not home, ſent one of her men on houſe-backe, to ſee if he could maſt him : and if (quoth ſhe) you maſt him not betwixt this and Colebrake, aſke for him at the Crane, but if you find him not there, then ride to London ; ſo I doubt he is either ſick, or ſome miſchance hath fallen vnto him.

The ſellow did ſo, and aſking for him at Colebrake, they anſwered, he went homewards from thence ſuch a day. The ſeruant enquiring what shold become of his master, and making much inquiry in the Towne for him: at length one told him of a houſe that was found on the high-way, and no man knew whence he came. He going to ſee the houſe, knew him ſtrictly, and to the Crane he goes with him. The Duke of the houſe perceiving this, was blaſphemous, and that night ſecretly away. The ſellow going unto the Justice deuiled his helpe: ſoonely after, word was brought that Jarman of the

## of Thomas of Reading.

Cole have givn ther all the monys he had ffor made Cole  
a sturye & the spynficer of the 1000l Jarman saide to them, when  
they woulde haue givn Cole much. When the woman being  
apprehended & examined, certifiid the truth, Jarman saide af-  
ter he was taken in the two of Gorrell, he and his wife were both  
hang'd, after they haue late open all these things before xpres-  
sion. Also he confesteth, that he being a Carpenter made that  
talle falling flwo, and how his wife deuised it. And how they  
had moneys too by that means i.e. persons. And yet not with stan-  
ding all the money whiche they haue gotten thereby, they prosper-  
ed not, but at their death were found very faire in debt.

When the living boord of this murdere, he was for the space  
of tw. yeare to payroll and hearpay, as he woulde not haue  
any suete, yairing also contumaciment, that the house shoulde  
quale be consumed with fire, wherein Cole was murdered,  
and that no man shoulde buile vpon that curst ground.

Coles substance at his death was exceeding great, he haue  
dally in his house an hundred men servants, and xl maides; he  
maintaines betwix about two or thre hundred people, spin-  
ners and carders, and a great many other houise-holders. His  
wife neuer after married, and at her death she borrowed a  
mighty summe of money toward the maintaining of the new  
busines spynficer. Her daughter was most richly married to  
a Gentleman of great worship, by whom she had many chil-  
dren. And some say, that the rver wherinto Cole was cast,  
did ever since carry the name of Cole, being calld, The rver  
of Cole, and the Towne of Colebyke,

How divers of the Clothiers wives went to the Churcheing  
of Suttons wife of Salisbury, & of their merriment. Ch. 13

Suttons wife of Salisbury which had lately bin deliuered  
of a sonne, agynst her going to Church, prepared great  
cheare i. at what time Simons wife of Southampton came  
ther, and so did dines others of the Clothiers wifes, one  
ly to make merray at this Churcheing feast: and whistled the  
Dames late at the Table, Crab, Weasell, and Wren, wal-  
ked on the brygge, and as the old Proverbe speacheth, many  
women

## The pleasant History

Women many have, in full meal at that time : for there were such prattling biforns : Some talkt of their husbands tre-  
warries, some theirn their wifes flittynesse, other sembe-  
cypred the costynes of their garments, some told many tales  
of their neighbours : all to be briefe, there was none of them  
but would have talkt for a whole day.

But when Crab, Weasell, and Wren saw this, they conclu-  
ded betwixt themselves, that as often as any of the women had  
a god bit of meate on their trenchers, they offering a cleane  
one, shold catch that commodity, and so they did, but the wo-  
men being bulle in talke, markd it not, till at the last one  
somes leisure to misse her meat : whereupon she said, that their  
boldnesse excidid their diligence. Not so, sayd Weasell, there is an hundred bolter than we. Name me one, sayd  
the woman if you can. Aches is bolter, quoth Crabbe. Now  
will you prove that, said the woman. Because, quoth he, they  
will creape under your coates, where we dare not come, and  
now & then bite you by the buttocks, as if they were braine.  
But what becomes of them, quod the womane their sweet meat  
hath to wrye sauce, and their lustines both often cost them their  
lives, therfore take heed. A god warning of a faire woman,  
said Wren, but I had not thought so fure a wit in a fatbelly.

The women seeing their men so merry, said it was a signe  
herk was good ale in the house. Thats as fit for a Churching,  
quoth Weasell, as a cudgell for a cart queane. Thus with  
pleasant communication and merry quips they dydne out the  
time, till the frust and spice cakes were set on the bord : At  
what time one of them began to ask the other, if they heard  
not of the evill murder of Thomas of Reading : What, said  
the rest, is old Cole murdrayd : when I pray you was the ded  
done : The other answered, on Friday last : O godd Lord, said  
the woman, how was it done, can you tell ?

As report goes, said the other, he was rostid alioe. O pitie-  
full ! was hee rostid : Indeed I heard one day, a man was  
murdrayd at London, and that he was sodden at an Inholders  
house, and serued it to the guests in stead of porke.

No neighbour, it was not at London, said another : I heare  
say

## of Thomas of Reading.

Say thus comynge from Englande his place called Colbyngt  
and it is reported for truthe, that a yonge yholde made ples of  
him, and powyd wytches yea, and made his shose forme of eare  
a peice of hir. But I say unto you ryghtwys, can you tell  
hov ih was knowne, bemesly, that a hōse murdereit it.

So bythe malle ( quoth Graye wife ) It is told me of  
my neighbours, that a certame hōse did speake, and told great  
thynges. That founys like a we, fide one of them. And by fide  
another, may not a hōse speake, as well as Belauns age? It  
may be, but it is unlikely, fide the thidre. But where was the  
hōse when he spake? As some say, quod she, he was in the field  
and had broke out of the stables, where he stwo fast-lockyd im-  
mighty strong yron setters, which he burst in parces, as they  
had beene straides, and broke do bare the stable doore, and so  
got away. The god-men comynge in at these spiches, af-  
ked what that was they talkt of. Harry, saith his wife, we  
heare that Cole of Reading is murdered: I pray you is it true  
I sайд Sutton, if it is true, that vnde delatre his Daile murde-  
red him in whiche house the man had spent many a pound: but  
did they make ples of him, said his wife: No, no, quoth her  
husband, he was scalded to death in a boyling caldron, and af-  
terward thowigne into a running riber that is hard by. But  
god husband, hov ih was it knowne? By his hōse, quoth her  
we hat, did he tell his master was murdered, and could the hōse  
speake Englyssh? Jesus what a feyth wooman art you, quoth  
he, to aske such a question: but to end this, you are all heartily  
welcome, god neighbours, and I am sorry you had no better  
chare. So with thankes the woomen departed. Thus haue ye  
heard the divers tales that will desyve abond of an euill deuy.

How Duke Robert deceiveth his keepers, and got from them  
how he met faire Margaret and in carrying her away, was  
taken for the which he had his eyes put out. Chap. 13.

Duke Robert, hunting, as you heare obtained the loue of  
faire Margaret, did not cast in his mynd, hov ih mighte  
deuide his keepers, and carry her quite away. In the end he  
being absolutely resolute what to doe, sent his letter unto

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bet, whereto he requested. But the troubis he had to fetch him  
to the Forest, betwixt Cardell and Gloucestres.

The young Ladouning secretly received his message, but  
known to her master or dame, in a mevynge betyme made her  
ready and got forth, walking to the appointed place, where  
her Loue shoulde meet her.

During her absence there, and thinking long on her Loue  
come, she entred into divers pessions, which arid prefigred  
some mislike fortune to follow. O my deare Loue, said she,  
holo hoso art thou in performing thy promise I to hym doe not  
thy heade agree with thy trutling & sic, these are thy wrotes,  
Come my deare Margaret, and with Cupids swifte wings alle  
to thy friend, be note as nimble in thy foyting, as the Camels  
of Bactria, that runnes an hundred miles a day, I will waite  
and say for the, so I stay not so long. Where is no Country  
like Australia; ambling horse, to carry the y have got one.

O my Loue (quoth she) here am I, but where art thou? O  
why doest thou play y trewest with time, who like the wind  
lives alway unseen, an ambling gennet of y paine is to gien  
to serue our turnes. A flying horse for flying Louers were  
most meete. And thus casting many looks those in the Holl-  
yoke stedes, by an houre to aspe him, she thought every  
minuts an houre, till she myght se hym, sometimes she would  
with her selfe a bird, that she myght lie through the ayre to  
met hym, as a pretty squirell to climbe the highest tree to descre  
his comynge: but finding her selfe vaine, she began thus  
to excuse hym, and perswaded her selfe saying:

How much to blame am I, to finde fault with my friend?  
Alas, men that lacke their liberty, must come when they can,  
not when they would, poore prisoners cannot doe what they  
desire, and then why shold I be so hasty? Therefore if late  
I may lay me downe, I will begnde unquiet thoughts with  
quiet slepe: it is fute that Galino biads no serpents, nor  
both Englands forrests nourish Weares or Lyons, therfore  
without hast y hope I may rest a while. Thus leaving faire  
Margaret in a swifte slumber, he will returns to Duke Ro-  
bert, who had thus plotted his escape from his keepers.

Hunting

## of Thomas of Reading.

Hunting libertie of the munte to smoke and hunt, he dolor  
mized on a daie as bee woulde follow the chace, to leane the  
bounds to the Hart, and the hunters to their homes, and being  
basse in thys spoyt, hymselfe woulde lie, whiche he person-  
ned at that tyme when he appoynted Margaret, to myte him,  
and so conmyng to the place, his hōse all in a water, & hym-  
selfe in a sweat, finding his Loue aslepe, he awaked her with  
a kisse, saying, arise faire Margaret, now comes that tyme  
wherein thou shalbe made a Quene: and presentely setting  
her on horsebacke, he posteth away.

Now when the Rāpers saw they had lost his company, and  
that at the killing of the game, bee was not present they were  
among themselves in such a myting, that they were ready one  
to stabbe another. It was thy fault, saide one, that bee thus  
escay't from us, that hast more mind of thy pleasure, then of  
thy prisoner, and by this meanes we are all undone. The o-  
ther said as much to him, that he had thought he had folloined  
him in the chace: but leauing at last this contention, the one  
posteth up to the Duke, while the others causted up and downe  
the Country to search for the Duke, who having left his hōse  
in travelling, was most unhappily mette on foot with faire  
Margaret, ere he could come to any towne where he might for  
moner haue another. But whē he espyed his Rāpers come to  
take him, he desired Margaret to make shif for her selfe, & to  
seeke to escaye them. But the being of a contrary mind, said,  
ibe would liue and die with him.

The Duke seeing himselfe ready to be surpized, drew out  
his sworð, and said he woulde buy his libertie with his life, be-  
soye he woulde yeld any more to be a prisoner, and therupon  
began a great fight betwixt them insomuch that the Duke had  
killed two of them: but hymselfe being foyre wounded, & faint  
with overmuch bleeding, at length fell downe, being not able  
any longer to stand: and by this meane the god Duke was  
taken with his faire loue, & both of them committed to prison.

But in the meane space, when Grayes wife had myled her  
maide, and saw she was quite gone, she made great lamenta-  
tion for her among her neighbours, for she loued her as dearyly

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as any child that ever she bare of her owne body. O Margaret (quoth shee) what cause hast thou thus to leane neare if thou diest mislike of any thing, why didst not thou tell me? If thy wages were too little, I would haue mended it: If thy apparel had bene too simple, thou shouldest haue had better: If thy tooke haue bin too great, I would haue had helpe for thee.

Farewell my swet Meg, the best servant that euer came in my mans house, many may I haue of thy name, but never any of thy nature; thy diligence is much in thy hands. I lase the whole gouernement of my house, and thereby easeth my selfe of that care, whiche now will come to me.

Here she hath left me my keyes unto my chestes, but my confort is gone with her presence, every gentle word that she was wont to speake, comes now into my mind, her courteous behaviour shall I never forget, with how swet and modest a countenance would she qualifie my over hasty nature! If repents my heart that ere I spoke soule word unto her. O Meg, wert thou here againe, I would never chide thee moare: but I was an unwise thy Dame for such a servant: what will become of me now, If I should chance to be sick, seeing she is gone, that was wont to be both my Apothecary and phisician.

Tell me, woth her neighbours there is no remedy now but to rest content, you shall one day hear of her deaute you not, and thinke this, that she was not so god, but you may get another as god, and therefore doe not take it so heauily. O neighbour, blame me not to grieue, saying I haue lost so great aie wel, and sure I am perswaded, that scant in a bodys life time they shall mete with the like.

I protest I wold circum England round about on my bare feete to mete with her againe. O, my Meg was surely stole away from me, els wold she not haue gone in such sort. Her husband on the other side grieved as much, & wold not night nor day riding up and downe to seeke her: but she poore soule, is fast lockt up in prison, and therfore cannot be met withall.

But when he is by understand of his brothers escape, he was maruelous wroth, giving great charge and commandement when he was taken, that both his eyen shold be put out and

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and be kept in prison till his dying day ; appointing also that she should lose her life soz presumption of leaving him.

This matter being rumoured over all England , it came to the eares of Gray & his wiffe , who hearing that Margaret also was there in prison appointed to die , the good aged woman never rested till she came to þ Court , where knelling before the King with many teares she besought his Matesy to spare the Maidens life , saying , Most royll King consider , I humbly beseech you , that þ Duke your brother was able to hitice any woman to his loue : much more a silly ghauden especially pzo. missing her marriage , to make her a Lady , a Dutcheas or a Queen , who would refuse such an offer , when at the instant they might get both a princely husband and a high dignitie : if death be a Louers gnedon , then what is due to hatred ? I am in my heart perswaded , that had my pore Margaret thought it would haue bȝed your highnes displeasure , she would never haue bought his loue so deare : had your grace made it known to your Commons , that it was unlawfull for any to marry the Duke your brother , who would haue attempted such an action if she had wilfully disobeyed y our Graces commandement , she might haue bene thought worthy of death ; but syng ignorant she offended , I beseech your Grace to recall the sentence , and let me still enloy my servant soz never will I rise , till your Matesy haue granted my petition .

His Highnes , who was of nature mercifull , beholding the womans abundant teares , tooke pitte on her , and granted her fute : whiche being obtained , she went home in all hast possible . And from thence , she wȝth her husband taking the founry to Cardiff castle , they came at that very instant when the Maiden was led toward her death , wȝo went in most soyfull sort to the same , saying , that they were not worthy to be accounted true louers , that were not willing to die for loue : and so wȝth a smiling countenance she passed on , as if she had eaten Apium Risus , which caused a man to die laughing : but her Dame Gray satting her self about her necke , and with many kisstes imbraced her , saying , Thou shalt not die my wench , but goe home with me ; and soz thy delatory , behold here the

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The Kings letters ; and with that she deliuered them vp to the gouernour of the Castle : who reading them found these innes written : Wee pardon the Grasdes life, and grant her liberty, but let her not passe, till shee her louers eyes put out, whiche we will haue you do in such sorte, that only the sight may perish, but the eye continue faire, soe which cause I haue sent to Ione Doctor Piero, that he may execute the same.

The Gouvernour of the Castle having read the Kings letter, said thus to the Spadon : The Kings Matessy hath pardoned thy life, and allowed thee liberty : but you must not passe before you see your Louers eyes put out. O Sir, said the Spadon, mistake not your selfe, they are my eyes that must be put out, and not the Dukes : as his offence greeveth me by my meanes, so I being guilty, ought to receve the punishment.

The Kings commandement must be fulfilled, said the Gouvernour : and therewithall Duke Robert was brought forthe, who hearing that he must lose his eyes, said thus : The noble minde is never conquered by griesse, nor overcome by mischance : but as the Warre reueleth his age by taking the spermen, so both a man lengthen his life with deuouring sorrowe : my eyes haue offendid the King, and they must be punished, my heart is in as great fault, why is not that killed ?

The Kings Matessy, said the Gouvernour, spares your life, of mere loue, and onely is content to satisfie the Law with the losse of your eyes, wherefore take in good part this punishment and think you haue deserved greater than is granted.

With this Margaret cryed out, saying, O my deare Lord, most gentle Prince, well may you wish that I had never bin borne, who by fixing of me must lose your sight : but happy would I count my selfe, if it so please the King, that I might redeme thy eyes with my life : o; else, that being an equall offender, I might receive equall punishment : haest thou sustaineid this smart so somme an venaunce and curse of high blood, it might with the more easie be borne, but to endure it soe such a one as I, it must needs cause a freble griesse to be increased.

Content thee faire Margaret, said the Duke: for honor ought to be given to vertue, not to riches: for glory, honor, nobilitie  
and

## of Thomas of Reading.

and riches without vertue, are but clokes of malitiousnes. And now let me take my leave of thy beauty, soz never must I behold thy face : notwithstanding I account my eyes well lost, in that I doe forget them soz to parles a paragon. Now faire beauties fare well, the Sunne, Spouse, and Statres shall I in this world never behold agayne, and farewell alse the fruitfull earth : well may I fele ther, but those pale windowes of my body are now denyed to vle to thes any more : and though the world hath euer bin my foe, yet will I bid thee farewel to , & farwell all my friends ; whiles I liue here in this world, I must suppose to shape, & wake when I come in heauen, where I hope to se you all againe. Yet had it pleased the King, I had rather have lost my life than my eyes. Life, why, what is it but a floure, a bubble in the waster, a spanne long, and full of miserie : of such small account is life, that every Soul-dier will sell it soz six pence. And trust me, I doe now detest life, woso than a goat doth hate Basill.

With that the Doctor prepared his instrument, and being ready to set to the Dukes eyes, he said, O stay master Doctor, till I haue conveyed my Lovers countenance downe into my heart : Come hither my sweet, and let me glue thee my last kisse, whyle mine eyes may direct me to thy cherry lipps. Then embracing her in his armes, he said, O that I might glue thee a kisse of xx. yeres long, & to satisfie my grady eyes with thy light : yet it doth somewhat content me, because thou art present at my punishment, that I may hold thee by the hand, to comfort my heart, at the sudden prickes of my eye.

This being said, the Doctor performed his dutyp, and so put out the chyallight : at what time D. Robert started vp, and with a most manly courage said, I must thanke his mate-rie, that though he depriveth me of my sight, yet he leaueth me eyes to weape soz my staines. But so soon as Margaret beheld the dead, she fell downe in a swoone, and much adoe her dame had to recouer her life: which when þ Duke understand he was wondrous woe, groping soz hers with his bladling eyes, saying, O where is my loue, soz God sake haue regard to her. And I pray you most heartily, god god wife Gray, le-

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her haue this fauour for my sake, that she may be used kindly. And with that she represled him into the Castle, and Margaret was carried away wondrouſe schameful; but her dame was most tender ouer her; and woul'd suffer her to lacke nothing. When she was ſomewhat well recovered, her Dame Gray ſet her on horsebacke: and at her coming to Gloreſter there was no small joy.

How Thomas Done being fallen to decay, was forsaken of his friends, & despised of his ſervantes: and how in the end he was raised againe through the liberality of the Clothiers.

Chap. 14

**S**uch as ſeyle the pleasure of the world, follow a shadow wherein is no ſubſtance: and as the adder Aspis tickleth a man to death, to both vaine pleasure ſatter vs, till it makes vs forget God, and conſume our ſubſtance, as by Tom Done it is apparent, who had throught a faire heart, and a liberall minde wasted his wealth, and like he was his gods conſumed, ſo his friends fled from him: And albeit he had bene of great abilitie, and thereby done god unto many, yet not a man regar- ded him in his poverty, but casting a ſcornefull countenance upon him, they paſſed by him with ſlender ſalutation: neither would any of his former acquaintance do him god or pleasure hit in the valuer of a ſarching; his former friendſhip done to them was quite forgot, and he made of as much account, as Job when he ſate on the dunghill.

Now, when his wicked ſervantes ſaw him in this disgrace with the world, they on the other ſide began to diſdaine him notwithstanding that he ( to his great cost ) had long time taught them dy, yet did they nothing regard it, but behinde his backe in moſt ſcornefull ſort derided him, and both in their words and actions greatly abuſed him, reverence they would doe none unto him, but when they ſpake, it was in ſuch malapert ſort, as woulde greate an honeſt minde to heare it.

At laſt it came to paſſe, that breaking out into mere con- tempt, they ſaid they woulde ſtay no longer with him, and that it was a great discredit to them, to ſerve a perſon ſo beggerly: where-

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Wherupon they thought it conuenient to siche for their bens  
fit elsewhere. When the distressed man found the matter so  
plaine, being in great greife he spake thus vnto them Now do  
I send, to my sorow, the small trut that is in this false wold  
Whyn, my masters (quoth he) haue you so much for golten my  
former prosperit, that you nothing regard my present nec-  
essitie; in your wants I forsooke you not, in your sicknesse I left  
you not, nor despised you in your great pouerty: it is not un-  
knowlone, though you doe not consider it, that I tooke some of  
you vp in the high-way, othersome from your nedy parents, &  
brought the rest from mere beggary to a house of boanty;  
where from patrie boyes, I brought you vp to mans estate, &  
hane to my great cost, taught you a trade, whereby you may  
live like men. And in requital of all my courtesie, cost and  
god will, will you now on a sudden forlake me: is this the best  
recompence that you can find in your hearts to yeld me?

This is farre from the minds of honest seruants. The fierce  
Lion taketh to those that doe him god, plucke but one thorne  
out of his foot, and for the same he will shew manifold fanoz.  
The wild Bull will not overthow his dam: and the very  
Dragons are dutifull to their nourishers. We better aduised  
e call to mind, I beseech you, that I haue not plukkt a thorne  
out of your feet, but drowne your whole bodies out of perills,  
when you had no meanes to helpe your selues, I onely was  
your support, and he, that when al other forlode you, did com-  
forf you in all your extremities.

And what of all this, quoth one of them - because you take  
ye vp poore, doth it therefore follow, that we must be your  
slaves? We are young-men, and for our part, we are no fur-  
ther to regard your profit, then it may staide with our preser-  
vment: Whyn shold we lose our benefit to pleasure you? if you  
taught vs our trades, and brought vs vp from holes to men, you  
had our service for it, whereby you made no small benefit, if  
you had as well used it, as we got it. But if you be poore you  
may thanke your selfe, being a just scourge for your prodiga-  
lise, and it is my opinion plaine, that to stay with you, is the  
wert way to make vs like you, neither able to helpe our selues

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no; our friends therfore in byaste come pay me my wages, for  
I will not stay, let the rest doe as they will, for I am resolued.

Well said his master, Needs thou not be gone, here is part  
of thy wages in hand, & the rest as soon as God send us it, thou  
shalt haue it: & with that, turning to the rest, he said, Let me  
yet intreat you to stay, and leane me not altogether desolate  
of helpe: by your labours must I live, and without you I  
know not what to doe. Consider therefore my ned, and regard  
my great charge. And if so my sake you will do nothing, take  
compassion of my poore childdren: stay my stowing hote, and let  
me not utterly fall, through your flying from me.

Cush (quoth they) what do you talkes to us? we can haue bet-  
ter wages, and serue a man of credit, where our care shall be  
farre better, & our gaines greater: therefore the world might  
count us right coxcombs, if wee shoulde forfiske our profit, to  
pleasure you: therefore adieu, God send you no money, for  
you are like to haue no more men: and thus they departed.

When they were gone, within a while after they met one  
with another, saying, What cheare, are you all come about in  
faith? What shoulde we doe else, quoth they: but hearke thou  
first, haue thou got thy wages? Not yett with the other, but I  
shall haue it, and that is as god, its but r. shillings. Dost thou  
so (said he) now I see thou art one of God Almighies folkes:  
Why so, said the other? Because (quoth he) thou wylt be fed  
with shales: but I'll tell thee one thing, t'wce: better to thee  
quickly to arrest him, lest some other doe it before, and there  
be nothing left to pay thy debt: hold thy peace, faire words  
make foole's faine, and it is an old saying, One bird in hand is  
worth two in bush: if thou dost not arrest him presently, I will  
not glae thee two pence for thy r. shillings. Now shall I come  
by him, quoth the other? glae me but two pots of ale, and Ile  
betray him, said he. So they being agreed this smalh. faro  
Judas comes to his late master, and told him that a friend of  
his at the daye would speake with him. The untrustfull  
man thinking no euill, went to the doore, where presently an  
Officer arrested him at his mans suite.

The poore man seeing this, being stracke into a sudden sor-  
row,

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row, in the grieve of his heart spake to this effect: Ah thou lewd fellow, art thou the first man that seekes to augment my miferie? Hauie I thus long giuen thee bread, to breed my overthow; and nourish thee in thy need, to wroke my destruction? Full little did I thinke, when thou so often diddest dip thy false fingers in my dish, that I gaue food to my cheltefesse: but what bothe complaints in these extremes? God wiffe, quoth he, unto my neighbours, and see if thou canst get any of them to be my basle. But in vaine was her paines spent. Then he sent to his kinsfolkes, and they denied him: to his brother and he would not come at him, so that there was no shifft, but to pson he must: but as he was going, a messenger met him with a letter from Master Cole, wherein as you heard, hee had promised him two hundred pounds: which when the poore man read, hee greatly rejoiced, and the wch the same to the Officer, hee was content to take his owne word. Whereupon Tom Doue went presently to Reading, where at his comming, he found all the rest of the Clothiers, lamenting Coles untimely death, where the wofull wsdow paid him the mony, by which deed all the rest of the Clothiers were induced to doe some thing for Doue. And therupon one gaue him ten pouuds, another twenty, another thirtie pounds, to begin the world anew: and by this meanes ( together with the blessing of God ) he grew into greater credit then ever hee was before. And riches being thus come vpon him, his former friends came falwing unto him, and when hee had no ned of them, then euerle one was readie to proffer him kindnesse. His wicked servants also that disdaied him in his distresse, were after glad to come creeping unto him, intracting with cap and knee for his fauour and friendship. And albeit hee seemed to forgive their trespasses done against him, yet hee would often say, he would never trast them for a straw. And thus he euer after liued in great wealth and prosperity, doing much god to the poore, and at his death, left to his childdren great lands.

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How faire Margaret made her estate and high birth knowne  
to her Master and Dame: & for the intire loue she bore to  
Duke Robert, made a vow never to marry, but became a  
Nun in the Abbey at Gloucester. Chapp. 15.

**A**fter faire Margaret was come againe to Gloucester, ne-  
ther din she behold the cleare day, but with a weeping etc:  
and so great was the sorrow which she conceived for the losse  
of Duke Robert her faithfull Louer, that she utterly despised  
all the pleasures of thys life, and at last bewayed her selfe  
in this sort unto her Dame:

**D**ay good Master and Dame, too long haue I dissembled  
my parentage from you, whom the froward destintes do pur-  
sue to deserved punishment The wofull daughter am I of the  
unhappy Earle of Shrewsbury, who euer since his banishment,  
haue done nothing but drawne mischance after mee:  
wherefore let me infreat you ( deare Master and Dame ) to  
haue your god-wisshes, to spende the remnant of my lfe in some-  
blessed monasterie.

When Gray and his wife heard this, they wondred great-  
ly, as well at her birth, as at her strange demand. Therupon  
her Dame knew not how to call her, whether Mardon or  
Madam, but said, O god Lord are you a Ladie, and I know  
it not: I am sozie that I knew it not before. But when the  
folks of the house heard that Margaret was a Lady, there was  
no small alteration: & moreouer her Dame said, that she had  
thought to haue had a match betwene her & her son: and by  
many persuasions did seeke to withdrawe her from being a  
Nun, saying in this manner: What Margaret thou art young  
and faire, the world ( no doubt ) bath better fortune for thee  
whereby thou maist leue an honourable issue behnd thes, in  
whom thou mayst live after death.

These and many other reasons did they alledge vnto her,  
but all in vaine: She making this reply, Who knowes not that  
this wold greteth the pleasure of an houre, but the sorrow of  
many daies? for it paleth euer that which it promiseth, which  
is nothing else but continuall trouble & vexation of the mind.  
Do you think if I had the offer & choice of the mightiest prin-  
cess

of Thomas of Reading.

res of Chrestendom that I could match my self better then to  
my Lord Jesus: So no hee is my husband, to whom I wold  
my self both body and soule, giving to him my heart, my loue  
and my most firme affection: I have overlong loued this vile  
world: therefore I beseech you farther distwade me not.

When her friends by no meanes could alter her opinion,  
the matter was made knowne to his Maestie, who against  
the tyme that she shoulde be recetued into the monasterie, came  
to Gloucester with most part of his Nobilitie, to honour her  
action with his princely presence.

All things being therfore prepared, the young Lady was in  
most princely wise attred in a goune of pure white satyn, her  
kirtle of the same, embrodered with gold about the skirts in  
most curious sort, her head was garnished with gold, pearlz,  
and precious stones, hauing her haire like thrids of burnisht  
gold, hanging downe behind in the manner of a princely bride  
about her ywoyn necke jewelz of inestimable pice were hung  
and her handwrests were compassed about with bracelets of  
bright shining Diamonds.

The streets thorow the which she shoulde passe, were plea-  
santly deckt with gréne oakē boughs. Then came the young  
Lady most like an heauenly Angel out of her masters house  
at what tyme all the bells in Gloucester were solemnly rung:  
She being led betwixt the Kings Maestie hauing on his Roy-  
all Robes, & Imperiall Crowne, & the cheife Bishop wearing  
his Mitre, in a Cope of cloth of gold, ouer her head a Canopp  
of white silke, fringed about in princely manner: before her  
went an hundred prielets singyng, and after her all the chiese  
Ladies of the Land: then all the wifes and Maides of Glo-  
cester followed, with an innumerable sort of people, on every  
side standing to behold her. In this sort she passed unto y Ca-  
shedjall Church, where she was brought to the Paunce gate.

The Lady Abbesse received her: where the beautilfull Mat-  
den knelinge downe, made her prayer in sight of all the people  
then with her owne hands she undid her virgins faire golwe  
and tooke it off, and gaue it away to the paunce: after that, her  
kirtle, then her jewelz, bracelets and rings, saying, Farindell  
the prieve & dantrie of this world. The ornaments of her head

## The pleasant History

were she next ther gaue away : and then was she set on one  
sps, where she was stripped, and in stead of her smocke of soft  
silke, had a smacke of rough haire put upon her.

Then came one with a paire of sheeres, and cut off her gol-  
den coloured lockes, & with dust and ashes all besprewed her  
head and face, which being done, she was brought again into  
the peoples sight bare set & bare leg'd, to whom she said: Now  
farewell the world, farewell the pleasures of this life, farewell  
my Lord the King, & to the Dukes swete loue farewell, now  
shall my eyes wepe for my former transgressions, & no more  
shall my tongue talke of vanity, farwell my god Master and  
Dame and farewell all god people.

With which words she was taken away, and never after  
sene abroad. When Duke Robert heard thereof, he desired  
that at his death, his body might be buried in Gloucester: in  
that Towne, quoth he, where first my cleare eyes beheld the  
heauenly beauty of my loue, & where for my sake she left  
loue the world: which hase performed accordingly.

The King also at his death requested to be buried at Kea-  
ding, for the great loue he hat to that place, among those  
Clothers, who living were his hearts comfort. Gray dyng  
monduous wealthy, gave land to the Monasterie whereinto  
Margaret was take. William Fitzallen also dyed a most rich  
man having builded many houses for the poore, whose sonne  
Henry after was the best shalott that was ever in London.

Sirron of Hallidary did also at his death much god, and  
gave an hundred li. to be parely lent to poore weavers of the  
Towne, to the woulos end. Simon of South-hampton gaue a  
most sumptuous gift towards the building of a monasterie at  
Winchester. Hodgekins of Halliar did also great god, also  
did Cuthbert of Kendal, who had married will. complexours of  
his owne house, gifting each of them 1.1. to beginne the world  
withall. Martin Brian of Manchester gave toward the buil-  
ding of a free schools in Manchester, a great masse of money.  
And thus (gentle Reader) have I finished my stoy of these  
worthy men, desiring the to take my patnes in good part,  
which will ingage me to greater matters, percelling this  
courteously accepted,

FINIS.